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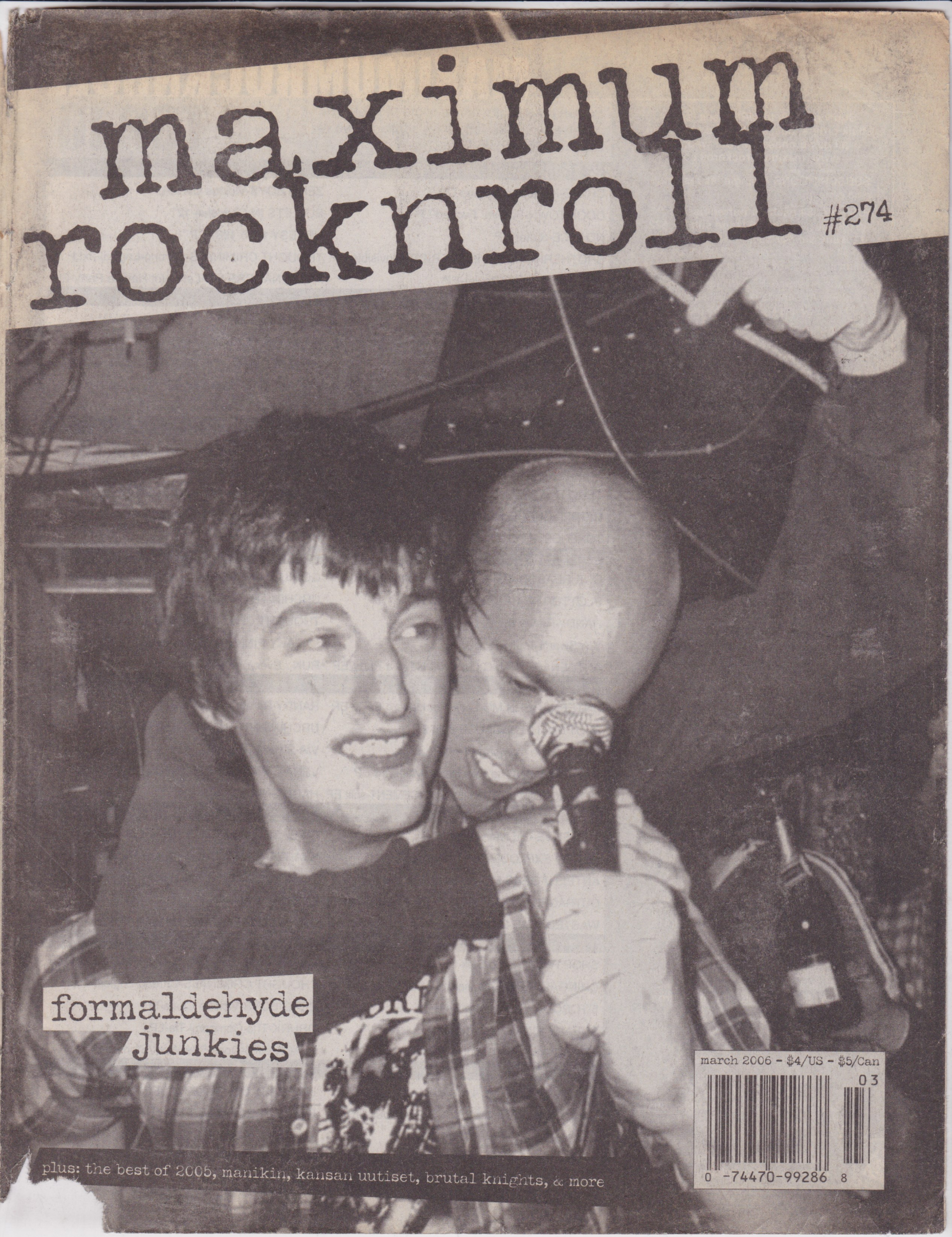

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TOP 10

For what it's worth, here's some of the MRR reviewers' current Top 10 (or so) things we've reviewed this month.

TIM BROOKS

- CRISIS-Holocaust Hymns-CD
- DOOMTOWN-Forever Fucked-LP
- NO DICE-Suffer-EP
- BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICITY-Invisible-EP
- PLASMID-Lust for Power-EP
- ZERO BOYS-Vicious Circle-LP
- BULLETS IN-Conceive-12"
- HERESY-1985-1987-LP
- THOUGHT CRIMINALS-Chrono-Logical-2xLP
- ANTEENAGERS MC-Let's Not Have a Party-EP

MITCH CARDWELL

- SNEAKY PINKS-EP
- ANTEENAGERS MC-Let's Not Have a Party-EP
- LIVE FAST DIE-Guitar Star-EP
- THOUGHT CRIMINALS-Chrono-Logical-2xLP
- ZERO BOYS-Vicious Circle-LP
- SAINTS-Live-LP
- SHOP FRONTS-So Sick-EP
- BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICITY-Invisible-EP
- ROCKS'-You'r So Boring-EP
- 5 TORQUAYS-Boys are Boys-45

ROB COONS

- OUTRAGED/POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT-split EP
- NK6/DUDMAN-split EP & live
- ZERO BOYS-Vicious Circle-LP
- HATRED SURGE/INSECT WARFARE-split EP & live
- TOREROS AFTER OLÉ-Porom Pom Pero-2xEP
- HERESY-1985-1987-LP
- RAJOITUS-Hat Mörker Amfetamin-EP
- WOUND UP-How to Make Friends...-EP
- DOOMTOWN-Forever Fucked-LP
- HARDSKIN / OIL-live

PAUL CURRAN

- ONE REASON-The End Never Mattered-EP
- BLOTTO/THE BECAUSE-split EP
- RANDY-Randy the Band-CD
- V/A-Swami Tour-EP
- ANTEENAGERS MC-Let's Not Have a Party-EP
- GORILLA ANGREB-Long Island/Supersyn-45
- URCHIN/ANTI-JUSTICE-split EP
- THOUGHT CRIMINALS-2xLP / SLITS-LP
- SNEAKY PINKS-I Can't Wait-EP
- RUN / Everyone at Hight Ti-live

JONATHAN FLOYD

- ANTEENAGERS MC-Let's Not Have a Party-EP
- BLOTTO/THE BECAUSE-split EP
- DRUNK-The Company Tie-LP
- ONE REASON-The End Never Mattered-EP
- OUTRAGED/POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT-split EP
- RANDY-Randy the Band-CD
- URCHIN/ANTI-JUSTICE-split EP
- V/A-Swami Tour-EP
- VENA CAVA / DUKES OF HILLSBOROUGH-live
- HARD SKIN-live

CHRIS HUBBARD

- THE SLITS-Girl Next Door-LP
- SET TO EXPLODE-Feel The Rage-EP
- ANTEENAGERS MC-Let's Not Have a Party-EP
- OUTRAGED/POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT-split EP
- WASTED TIME-Shameless-EP
- DISEASE/ULTIMO PRESO-split EP
- SVARTENBRANDT-Sista Dan' I Ramplijuset-EP
- TOREROS AFTER OLÉ-Porom Pom Pero-2xEP
- ESPASMODICOS-EP
- SIGNAL LOST / GIANT HAYSTACKS-live

KENNY KAOS

- SHOP FRONTS-So Sick-EP
- CHINGALEROS-Release the Apes-LP
- 5 TORQUAYS-Boys are Boys-45
- SNEAKY PINKS-I Can't Wait-EP
- ROCKS'-You'r So Boring-EP
- ANTEENAGERS MC-Let's Not Have a Party-EP
- THOUGHT CRIMINALS-Chrono-Logical-2xLP
- ZERO BOYS-Vicious Circle-LP
- DRUNK-The Company Tie-LP
- BLACK LIPS-Does She Want/Stoned-45

CAROLYN KEDDY

- ANTEENAGERS MC-Let's Not Have a Party-EP
- BLACK LIPS-both 45s / V/A-Swami Tour-EP
- CRISIS-CD / DELTA 5-Singles-CD
- SNEAKY PINKS-EP / SHOP FRONTS-EP
- GORILLA ANGREB-Long Island/Supersyn-45
- LIVE FAST DIE-Guitar Star-EP
- STEVE TREATMENT AND THE NOMEN-EP
- THOUGHT CRIMINALS-Chrono-Logical-2xLP
- HARD SKIN-live / I LOVE MY LABEL-live
- GIANT HAYSTACKS-live

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TOP 10

Please send two copies of vinyl or CD-only releases to the address on the previous page. See Demos section for where to send tapes & CD-Rs.

WILL KINSER

TOREROS AFTER OLÉ-Porom Pom Pero-2xEP	DOOMTOWN-Forever Fucked-LP
V/A-Deutschland In Decline-EP	CHINGALEROS-Release the Apes-LP
SICK TERROR/MIGRA VIOLENTA-split EP	AGE-Four Wings-LP
GUNNER HANSEN-Village Idiot-EP	PISSCHRIST-Forged in the Flames-EP
PLASMID-Lust for Power-EP	ZERO BOYS-Vicious Circle-LP

RAY LUJAN

RANDY-Randy the Band-CD	V/A-As Time Goes By-EP
ANTEENAGERS MC-Let's Not Have a Party-EP	SNEAKY PINKS-I Can't Wait-EP
SUICIDE BID-This Is the Generation-CD	URCHIN/ANTI-JUSTICE-split EP
THE MACHINES WILL TAKE OVER-45	HI-FIVES / GROOVY GHOULIES-live
ONE REASON-The End Never Mattered-EP	THE ADOLESCENTS-live / MARKED MEN-live

ALLAN MCNAUGHTON

BULLETS IN-Conceive-12" / DRUNK-LP	THOUGHT CRIMINALS-2xLP / ZERO BOYS-LP
SHOP FRONTS-EP / V/A -As Time Goes By-EP	SLITS-BBC Recordings 1977-81-LP
BLOTTO/THE BECAUSE-split EP	HARD SKIN-live / TRAGEDY-live
V/A-Swami Tour-EP / HÜSKER DÜ-Ultracore...-LP	CLOROX GIRLS-live / I LOVE MY LABEL-live
GORILLA ANGREB-Long Island/Supersyn-45	BORN/DEAD-live

GOLNAR NIKPOUR

NK 6 / DUDMAN-split EP	OUTRAGED/POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT-split EP
GORILLA ANGREB-Long Island/Supersyn-45	ANTEENAGERS MC-Let's Not Have a Party-EP
THOUGHT CRIMINALS-Chrono-Logical 2xLP	BLACK LIPS-both 45s
DISEASE / ULTIMO PRESO-split EP	V/A-Deutschland In Decline-EP / PISSCHRIST-EP
TOREROS AFTER OLÉ-Porom Pom Pero-2xEP	PLASMID-Lust for Power-EP

DONNA POOLE

SHOP FRONTS-So Sick-EP	SNEAKY PINKS-I Can't Wait-EP
WASTED TIME-Shameless-EP	LIVE FAST DIE-Guitar Star-EP
V/A-Swami Tour-EP	BLOTTO/THE BECAUSE-split EP
SET TO EXPLODE-Feel The Rage-EP	BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICITY-Invisible-EP
V/A-As Time Goes By-EP	CHINGALEROS-Release the Apes-LP

BRUCE ROEHRS

MAXIMUM RNR-Horns Up-CD	RAJOITUS-Hat Mörker Amfetamin-EP
LRF-Firm as a Rock-CDEP	GUNNER HANSEN-Village Idiot-EP
DOOMTOWN-Forever Fucked-LP	HERESY-1985-1987-LP / NO DICE-Suffer-EP
OUTRAGED/POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT-split EP	INSTANT AGONY-One Man Army-EP
WOUND UP-Fuck Fashion-EP	HARD SKIN/NUTS&BOLTS-live / BORN/DEAD-live

RYAN WELLS

SNEAKY PINKS-I Can't Wait-EP	SHOP FRONTS-So Sick-EP
LIVE FAST DIE-Guitar Star-EP	ANTEENAGERS MC-Let's Not Have a Party-EP
STEVE TREATMENT AND THE NOMEN-EP	THOUGHT CRIMINALS-Chrono-Logical-2xLP
WE MARCH-The Madness Ends Here-CD	BLACK LIPS-Does She Want/Stoned-45
GORILLA ANGREB-Long Island/Supersyn-45	HARD SKIN-live

ZINE TOP TEN

Akink #17	The Inner Swine Vol. 11 #4
Born 20 Years Too Late #5	Nerve #7
Context Clues #1	Peops #3
East Village Inky #29	Pipe Bomb #33
Enter the Ninties: Poets, Punks, Politics	Zoinked #9

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#150/Nov '95. NY Loose, Snap-Her, Sick Boys, Splatterheads, Pipe, Pregnant Man, Final Conflict, Rawness, Stink, Goblins, Smellie Fingers.

#151/Dec '95. Lowdowns, My White Bread Mom, Queen B's, Electric Frankenstein, Turtlehead, Serpico, Trick Babys, In/Humanity, Stains, Varukers, Pist, Terrible Virtue.

#153/Feb '96. Snort, Hatchetface, Little Ugly Girls, ADZ, Oxymoron, NOTA, Stun Guns, Surfin' Turnips, Gutfiddle, Karen Monster, Dimestore Haloes.

#154/Mar '96. Motards, Subincision, Stisism, Donnas, Stallions, Count Backwards.

#156 pt 1/May '96. Public Toys, Crunch, Peter & The Test Tube Babies, Nails Of Hawaiian, Splash 4, Yawp!, Lifetime, Sickoids.

#156 pt 2/May '96. Australian Special: Beanflipper, Melancholy, Blitz Babiez, Crank, SubRosa, Mindsnare, TMT, H-Block, B-Sides, Fallout, Frenzal Rhomb, Lawnsmell, One Inch Punch, Chickenshit, No Deal.

#160/Sept '96. Automatics, Boycot, Toast, Morning Shakes, Mormons, John Q. Public, Sex Offenders, Ballgagger, Business, Apocalypse Babys, Good Riddance.

#161/Oct '96. Jet Bumpers, Steel Miners, Divisia, Lopo Drido, Red #9, Nothing Cool, Sink, Sires, Newtown Grunts.

#162/Nov '96. Phantom Surfers, Candy Snatchers, the Stain, National Guard, Torches To Rome, Restos Fosiles, Two Bo's Maniacs, Snuka, Redemtion 87, Torture Kitty.

#163/Dec '96. Last Sons of Krypton, Prostitutes, Wig Hat, Boys, Let It Rock, Enemy Soil, Vulcaneers, Half Empty, Zeros, Deadcats, Teen Idles.

#166/Mar '97. Walking Abortions, Hickey, '77 Spreads, Sanity Assassins, Cards In Spokes, Joey Tampon & The Toxic Shocks, Adjective Noun, Suicide King, Lenguas Armadas, Trauma, De Crew.

#170/July '97. Tedio Boys, Mine, The Four Cockroaches, Meanwhile, Broken, (Young) Pioneers, Hood Rat, Bristle, The Slits. Scene reports: West Canada, France, Indonesia.

#174/Nov '97. Stratford Mercenaries, Lickity Split, Bladder, Piss Shivers, Barnhills, In/Humanity, Education theme issue.

#175/Dec '97. One Man Army, Those Unknown, Boiling Man, Piao Chong, Exploding Crustaceans, Last Year's Youth, Heartdrops, Dirty Burds, Dimestore Haloes.

#179/April '98. Boy Sets Fire, Tres Kids, Idyls, Spat & The Guttersnipes, The Posers, Explosive Kate, Douche Flag.

#180/May '98. Reinforce, Discontent, TV Killers, Slack Action, Eyeliners, Mademoiselle, MK Ultraviolence, Haulin' Ass, 97a, Infiltrators, Jack Saints, Stray Bullets.

#181/June '98. Grapefruit, Druggies, DDI, Bonecrusher, Normals, All Bets Off, Stiletto Boys, Summerjack, Cell Block 5.

#184/Sept '98. Absentees, Devoid of Faith, UXA, Umlaut, Four Letter Word, Streetwalkin' Cheetahs, Ricanstruction, Libertine, Indecision, Snarkout Boys.

#185/Oct '98. Traitors, Wimpy Dicks, Armed & Hammered, Dylan McKays, NME, Tezacrifco, Worm, Roswells, Raxola, Beatnik Termites.

#186/Nov '98. Registrators, August Spies, Marilyn's Vitamins, Chinese Love Beads.

#187/Dec '98. Real Kids, Sawn Off, Cretins, Spider Cunts, Heroines, Third Party, No Class, Skabs.

#188/Jan '99. Stitches, Neighbors, Mansfields, Real Swinger, Marauders, Mark Bruback, Mars Moles, DOA.

#189/Feb '99. Monster X, Peter & the Test Tube Babies, Steam Pig, Maurauders, Yakuza, Dead Beat, Halfways, Hot Rod Honeys, DeRita Sisters.

#190/Mar '99. John Holstrom, Powerhouse, Brezhnev, Slappy, Black Pumpkin, Smartbomb ca, Wanda Chrome, Long Gones, Smogtown, Halfways, Tilt.

#191/April '99. Murder Suicide Pact, Kil Kare, Dudman, Super Hi-Fives, Better Than Elvis DJs, Pet Peeves, Loose Ends, Slingshot Episode.

#192/May '99. Los Crudos, Burning Kitchen, Henry Fiat's Open Sore, Polythene, Kangaroo Recs.

#193/June '99. Munster Recs, DS-13, Safety Pins, Pussycats, Piolines, False Alarm, Darlington, Bad Stain, Bodies, Houseboy, Mullets.

#194/July '99. Deathreat, Last Match, God Hates Computers, Fokkewolf, Flesh Eating Creeps, Aside, Hoppin' Mad, Kid Dynamite, Thee Outcasts.

#195/Aug '99. Moral Crux, RC5, Have Nots, Ill Tempered, Dysentery, Greg Higgins, Revlons, Larry & the Gonowheres..

#196/Sept '99. Hopscotch, Catharsis, Orchid, The Pricks, Grissle, Product X, Reaching Forward, Emerge, Third Degree, "Epicenter Zone '90-'99".

#197/Oct '99. Reducers SF, Lower Class Brats, Reactor 7, TheGodsHateKansas, Futuro Incierto, Showcase Showdown, Waifle, Flat Earth Recs.

#198/Nov '99. Hail Mary, Pressure Point, Bump 'N Uglies, The Victims, A//Political, Outlast

#199/Dec '99. Locust, Ratos de Porao, USV, Razlog Za, G-3, Swarm, WHN?, Mt. St. Helens, Black Cat Music, Enemy Soil.

#200/Jan '00. American Steel, Curse, Gee Vaucher, Hers Never Existed, Aaron Cometbus, Active distro, Toxic Narcotic, MRR catalogue #100-200.

#201/Feb '00. Beerzone, Towards An End, Daybreak, "Best Punk Singles of the '90s," the WTO riots in Seattle.

#202/March '00. KTMWQ, Real Estate Fraud, Strike Out, Broken Rekids, the Haggard, GC5, Gore Gore Girls, the Catheters.

#203/April '00. Spazz, Slang, *Slug & Lettuce* zine, *Suburban Voice* zine, As We Once Were, Red Angel Dragnet, Four Letter Words, Slampt Records, the Wednesdays, the Fuses.

#204/May '00. Cocksparrer, Talk Is Poison, Red Scare, Put Downs, Out Cold, Geraldine, Michael Knight, CBGaV, Pillage People.

#205/June '00. Punks With Kids special. Skudz, 50 Million, Legion, Wilbur Cobb, Coalition.

#206/July '00. Drunk, ESL, Ambition Mission, Lord High Fixers, Cripple Bastards, Dig Dug, Federation X, Amulet, Valentine Killers.

#207/Aug '00. Harum Scarum, Raw Power, Unseen, Pekinska Patka, Hudson Falcons, Dementia 13, Confine, Allergic to Whores.

#208/Sept '00. Le Shok, the Commies, the Chemo Kids, Day of Mourning, Affront, Diaspora, Whippersnapper, Hopeless/Sub City, Prank, Countdown to Oblivion

#209/Oct '00. Loose Lips, Godstomper, Peace of Mind, FYP, I Farm, Annalise, Cattle Decapitation, Riot/Clone.

#210/Nov '00. J Church, Profane Existence, Pezz, Pre-Teens, Templars, This Machine Kills, Subtonix, OB.

#214/Mar '01. Crispus Attucks, Fetish, Lifes Halt, Mr. Roboto, Dream Dates, Satan McNugget, Havoc, Briefs.

#215/April '01. No Means No, Vitamin X, Injections, Y, Dils, Last In Line, Don Austin, Deranged Records

#216/May '01. Propagandhi, Angelic Upstarts, Discordance Axis, Ruination, Photographer: Chris Boarts, Strap-Ons, Lynnards Innards

#217/June '01. Joey Ramone R.I.P., Tear It Up, Skitsystem, The Pattern, CrimethInc., Esperanza, The Chicago Blackout, Photographer: Ace

#218/July '01. Guyana Punchline, Les Sexareenos, The Devil Is Electric, Red Monkey, White Collar Crime, Forca Macabra, The Ataris, Suicide, The Mob

#220/Sep '01. Latin American Issue. Aubuso Sonoro, Anti-Todo, Fuerza X, Apatia No, Manganzoids, Demencia, Sick Terror, Tocatta y Bulla, NTN, Argies, Reconcile, Anti-Korpus, Ruido De Odio, Los Pepiniyos, Rebelion Disidente, Brazil Scum , Kim Bae Photo Essay.

#221/Oct '01. Tales from the G8 Summit, Reflections, Soophie Nun Squad, Totalitär, True North, Wontons, Sin Dios, Bottles & Skulls, Scarred For Life, Flowers in the Dustbin pt. 2, Remains of the Day, Ritchie Whites, B'67.

#222/Nov '01. Dios Hastio, Tragedy, Four Letter Word, *Salad Days* author Charles Romalotti, Very Metal, Maurice's Little Bastards, the Rotters, MDC Brazilian tour diary, the Cravats, JR Ewing, Dutch scene report, extended news section, "Globalization Rhetoric & Reality,"

#223/Dec '01. "US Policy in the Middle East," "Revisiting 1948," Manifesto Jukebox, Good Riddance, Pokers, Viimenen Kolonna, Bluebloods, Vitamin X tour diary, Flakes, Pg, 99, the Mob, 7 Days of Samsara.

#224/Jan '02. "Legislation Since Sept. 11," Rendencion 9.11, Metro Youth, Severed Head of State, Piranhas, Paraf, Backstabbers, Inc, An Albatross, Citizen Fish Tour, SPAM Records, the Virus, Action Time.

#225/Feb '02. Lengua Armada, Breaker Breaker, 3 Yrs. Down, Scrotum Grinder, Turun Tauti, Flux Of Pink Indians, Holding On, Pauki, 86'd, See You In Hell, Red Light Sting, Nazis From Mars, Scare Tactic.

#226/Mar '02. Queer punk special issue. Vaseline, Quails, Skinjobs, Italian queer punk report, Vaginal Davis, Feelings on a Grid, Sissies, Scott Free, Dumba, Columns.

#227/Apr '02. Bellrays, Rhinos, Wasted, Kristofer Pasanen, Business, Assert, DS 13 tour report, Life Set Struggle, Iowaska, Zounds.

#229/June '02. Countdown To Putsch, The Awakening, Dave Hill Distribution, Holier Than Thou, Kill Devil Hills, Sound Of Failure, E.T.A., Nubs, Les Baton Rouge, New Disorder Records, Career Suicide, Swellbellys, The Sinyx.

#230/July '02. Bitchin', Redencion 911, Phantom Limbs, Secretions, Holy Molar, Sharp Knife, Mighty John Waynes, A Global Threat, Groovie Ghoulies, Reproach, Annie Anxiety.

#231/Aug '02. Epoxies, Puppy Vs. Dyslexia, Koro, Blocko, Amdi Petersen's Armé, Piss & Vinegar Zine, Schizophrenic Records, Toys That Kill, Give Us Barabbas, Dirt.

#232/Sept '02. "No Future" article, Lost, Fartz, Sell Outs, Razors Edge, Stakeout, Dillinger Four, All or Nothing HC, Fleshies, Bridge Nine Records, Akashic Books, Liberty.

#233/Oct '02. "All Ages" article, Scholastic Deth, Runnamucks, Sinners & Saints, Panic, Gasolheads, Jewws, Futures, Michael Landon's Commandos, Storm the Tower, Against Me!, Balance of Terror, Class Assassins, Spazm 151.

#234/Nov '02. Snobs, What Happens Next? Brazilian tour, The Oath, Radio 4, Feederz, Charm City Suicides, Selfish, Riot 99, End On End, Peawees, Born/Dead.

#235/Dec '02. Anti-war Special Issue. Anti-war guest columns. Anti-war scene reports. Articles: "Reading for Democracy," "War on Iraq?" "Unfinished American Revolution," Resource Guide, "US Involvement in Iraq,""Axis of Empire." Long Island DIY Scene, What Happens Next? Brazilian tour part 2, Smalltown, Kylesa, Crash & Burn.

#236/Jan '03. Mr. California & State Police, Iron Lung, Riff Randells, Chainsaw, *Artcore*, Latterman, Travis Cut, Phenomenauts, Pretty Little Flower, X-Cretas.

#237/Feb '03. Top Ten Records of 2002, "Music as a Weapon: Artists in Wartime," Dirt Bike Annie, Let It Burn, Stockyard Stoics, King Khan & Shrines, 625 Records, Feast Or Famine, Rudimentary Peni, Coachwhips, Self Defense.

#238/Mar '03. World Burns To Death, Chronics, Vilently Ill, Dystopia, Pilger, Exotic Fever, Brezhnev, R.A.M.B.O., Blown To Bits, Put To Shame, Deconditioned, This Bike Is A Pipe Bomb, Monsters.

#239/Apr '03. Romanian D-beat, Meconium Records, Amazombies, Abandoned Hearts Club, Mike V. & the Rats, Nicki Sicki, Bigamists, Bolivia article, Negatives, Kuolema, Defiance.

#240/May '03. I Quit, Apers, Headless Horsemen, Lesser of Two, Barse, Nightmare, Music Zine Roundtable, Exploding Hearts, Flesh Packs, Blacklist Brigade.

#241/June '03. Tyrades, Lumbergh, The Stand By Me, New Mexican Disaster Squad, Cut the Shit, Libertinagem, 17th Class, the Ends, He Who Corrupts, Deathbag, Cria Cuervos.

#242/July '03. Pensacola and San Francisco punk protest reports, John Wilkes Booze, Anfo, Bob Suren, Migra Violenta, Jackson 8, *Snakepit* zine, Krigshot, the Rites, Deadfall.

#243/Aug '03. "Media Alliance and the FCC," Striking Distance, Malcontents, Invisible City, Books Lie, Charm City Art Space, Hopeless Dregs of Humanity, I Shot Cyrus, Sunday Morning Einsteins, What the Kids Want, Onion Flavored Rings.

#244/Sept '03. None More Black, Deadline, Rai Ko Ris, Boxed In, Exploding Hearts, Raving Mojos, Blackout Terror, Morticia's Lovers, Thee Fine Lines, *Trust* zine.

#245/Oct '03. No Time Left, Riistetyt, Intense Youth, The Gimmies, Ass End Offend, Artimus Pyle, La Fraction, Kung Fu Rick, The Horror.

#246/Nov '03. Punk & Resistance in Israel, Letters from Palestine, No Choice, FM Knives, Bury the Living, Marked Men, The Dirty Burds, Provoked.

#247/Dec '03. DSB, The Boils, Popular Shapes, Phoenix Foundation, Bathtub Shitter, Meet the Virus, Cropknox, "Punk Babies on Tour" Article.

#248/Jan '04. Discharge, Superhelicopter, Jed Whitey, Black Friday '29, Find Him And Kill Him, The Lids, Impratical Cockpit, Face Up To It, History Of Maximum Rocknroll Radio.

#249/Feb '04. From Ashes Rise, Hagar the Womb, This Is My Fist, Skip Jensen, Gride, Katy Otto/Mike Taylor Dialogue, John Yates, Pointing Finger.

#250/Mar '04. Best Records of 2003, Miami FTAA protests, Clorox Girls, FIYA, "La Villita: Chicago Pilsen Scene," Terminus Victor, Restarts, Damage Done, Knights of New Crusade.

#251/April '04. The Fuse!, Väkivaltaa, Modern Machines, Microcosm, Migra Violenta Euro tour diary, Allegiance, Neurotic Swingers, Xavier Lepaige Photos, Le Scrawl,Vrah.

#252/May '04. Fucked Up, Firestarter, Inepsy, Laukaus, Great Clearing Off, Radio Reelers, Extreme Noise Records, 46 Short, The State, John The Baker, Free Verse, Chrystaei Branchaw photos.

#253/June '04. Sweet J.A.P., Gorilla Angreb, Vöetsek, Minority Blues Band, Scruvy Dogs, Molotov Cocktail, Kidnappers, Schifosi, King Ly Chee, YDI.

#254/July '04. No Hope For The Kids, Dropdead, Diskords, Breakfast, Asschapel, I Excuse, Strung Up, To Hell & Back, Four Eyes, Lamant, Gammits MW, scene reports from Portland, Boston and Germany.

#255/Aug '04. "Punk's Not Dead, Reagan Is" Special Issue. Leatherface, Get It Away, The Hatepinks, Keen Monkey Work, New York City, South Dakota, Czech Republic, Philippines, Russia.

#256/Sep '04. The Observers, Witchhunt, Annihilation Time, Zann, Eskapo, FxPxO, Haymarket Riot, Fourth Rotor, Les Georges Lenigrad, Texas scene, Newfoundland, Indiana, England.

#257/Oct '04 The Election Issue, Jesse Townley, Matt Gonzalez, Rattus, Fighting Dogs, Hero Dishonest, Kickz, The Boss Martians, Reactionary Three, Slovakia, Australia, South Wales, South East Asia.

#258/Nov '04. Career Suicide, Cathy Wilkerson of the Weather Underground, No Fucker, The Repos, Dominatrix, Ashtray, Deadstop, Midnight Creeps, Michale Graves, The Diffs, The Shemps, Abi Yo Yo's.

#259/Dec '04. Bad Business, Penelope Houston, Rambo, AI, Ass, I Attack, The Krunchies, A-Lines, Insurgence Records, The Hates, Accidents, Massgrav, The Critics, Merciless Game, SF Hotel Workers Strike, photos from Japan, SoCal & the Bay Area.

#260/Jan '05. Technocracy, The Total End, Only Crime, True North, Partisans, For The Worst, Dick Spikie, Straight to Hell, Black Cross, Action, Ergs, Rusty Nails, Queer Activism in London, Greg Shaw tribute, John Peel tribute, "Andrew "Stig" Sewell tribute, Beijing punk photos.

#261/Feb '05. Year End Top Tens, Riistetyt, Lost Cherrees, Complete Control, Cheap Sex, Gasoline Please, Beerzone, Greyskull, MOTO, Water Into Beer Fanzine, Swe-Punk scumpit, Japan punk photos, Bay Area punk photos, Texas, Russia, and Malaysia scene reports.

#262/March '05. Kärnvapen Attack, Neo Boys, Catholic Boys, Dead Moon, Wreckage, Frantix, Armitage Shanks, Wendy Kroys, To What End?, Cell Block 5, Bent Outta Shape, Ah-Nah Tron, Slovakia, Indonesia, and Illinois scene report

#263/April '05. All Crusties Spending Loud Night 2004, Bombenalarm, Battleship, APA, The Black Lips, Words That Burn, Flamingo 50, The Low Budgets, Mellakka, I Object, Antisect, Bay Area scene report, South Coast UK scene report.

#264/May '05. Crime, Love Songs, Bruce Banner, Intent, The Holy Mountain, Have Heart, The Bill Bondsmen, The Real Losers, archive photos, Bay Area scene photos, Taiwan and Rochester scene reports.

#265/June '05. Endless Nightmare, Hard Skin, Kolokol, Amebix, Transistor Transistor, The Safes, The Detonators, Finland scene report, France scene report, SoCal scene report.

#266/July '05. The Carbonas, MDC, Destrux, Unkind, Hiretsukan, Giant Haystacks, Ohuzaru, Teenage Harlets, Michigan scene report, San Diego scene report, Eugene, OR scene report, photos.

#267/August '05. Knugen Faller, Sleeper Cell, Motorama, Gulcher Records history, Army of Jesus, The Slicks, Thee Merry Widows, Rotten Sound, The Faction (UK), Czech scene report, New Zealand scene report.

#268/September '05. Signal Lost, Gulcher Records history part two, Teenage Bottlerocket, Mattilda (aka Matt Bernstein Sycamore), The Spectacle, Bang Sugar Bang, Chumbawamba, Reason of Insanity, Forward To Death, Flyer art, Florida Scene Report, Bay Area scene report, photos.

#269/October '05. Hammer, Desastre, Human Eye, Les Bellas, Gasmask Terror, Randy "Biscuit" Turner tribute, Stalag 17 (UK), Stepbrothers, Retching Red, Weaving the Deathbag, Gather, Chicago and SoCal scene reports.

#270/November '05. Clorox Girls European Tour, Czolgosz, Regulations, Time Flys, Taxi, No More Lies, Oil!, Paddy Costello of the Dillinger Four, Smartpils, Revenge of Mongoloid, Pisschrist, Scene reports: Puerto Rico, UK, Russia.

#271/December '05. Besthöven, Abductee SD, Tractor Sex Fatality, George Harrison, Deathtoll, Photos by icki, Ice & The Iced, the Ulcers, Chimps Eat Bananas, Deranged/Criminal IQ/Kick'n'Punch Records. Scene Reports: Iowa, Maine, Illinois.

#272/January '06. Conga Fury, Let's Grow, Frustration, Bastardass, Icons of Filth, Burial, Hrydjuverk, Cranked Up!, Urrke T & the Midlife Crisis, Tropezio, *Baboon of Sickness* zine. Scene Reports: Austin, France, Michigan, Larry Wolfley photos.

#273/February '06. Fuses. Endstand. Out Cold. Pedestrians. Acts of Sedition. BadEatingHabits. Western Addiction. Jesus Fucking Christ. Toxic Waste. Punk photo spread. St. Louis, USA & Brighton, UK scene reports.

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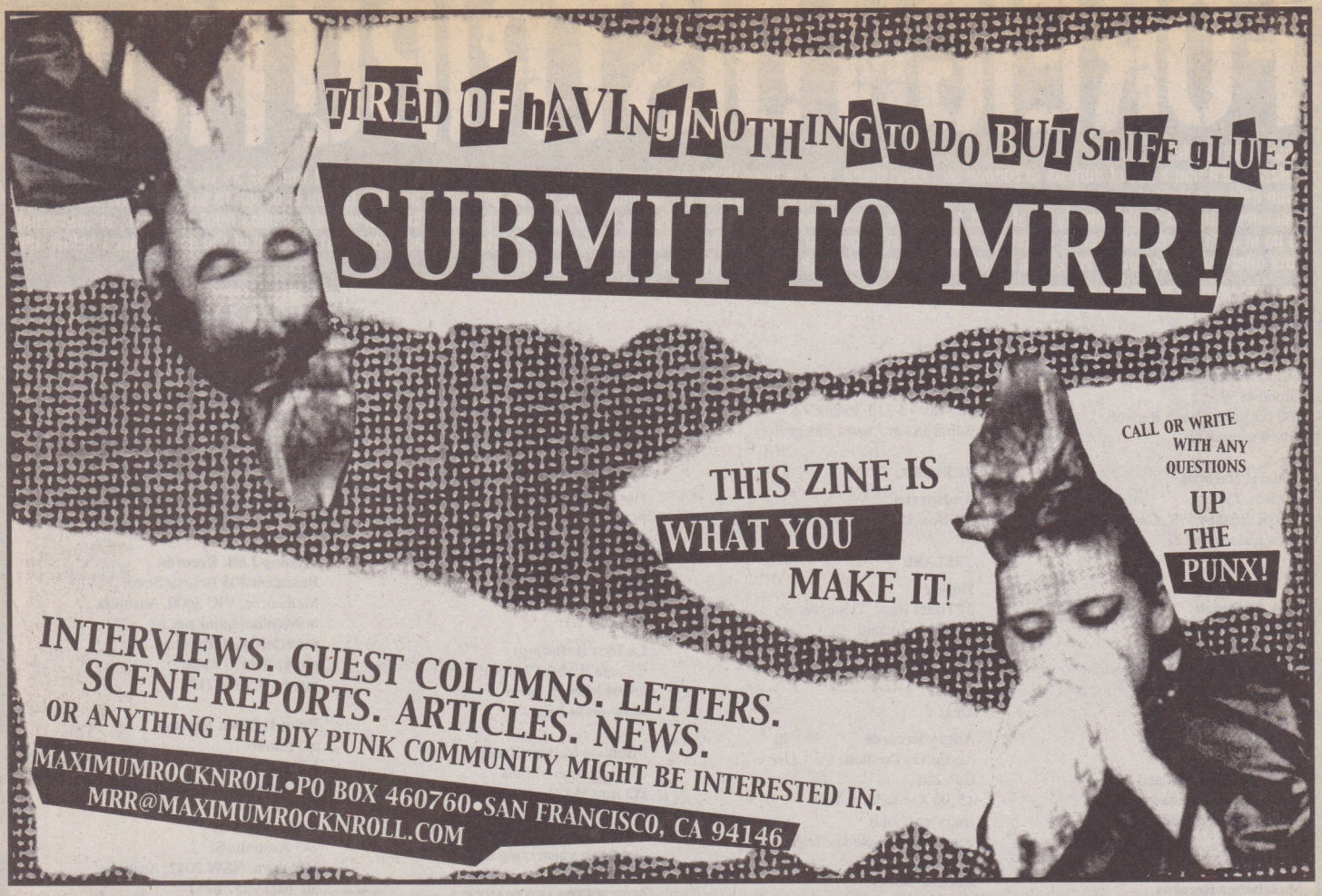

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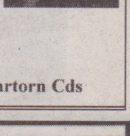

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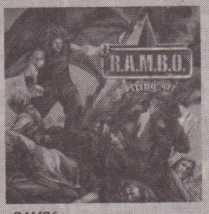

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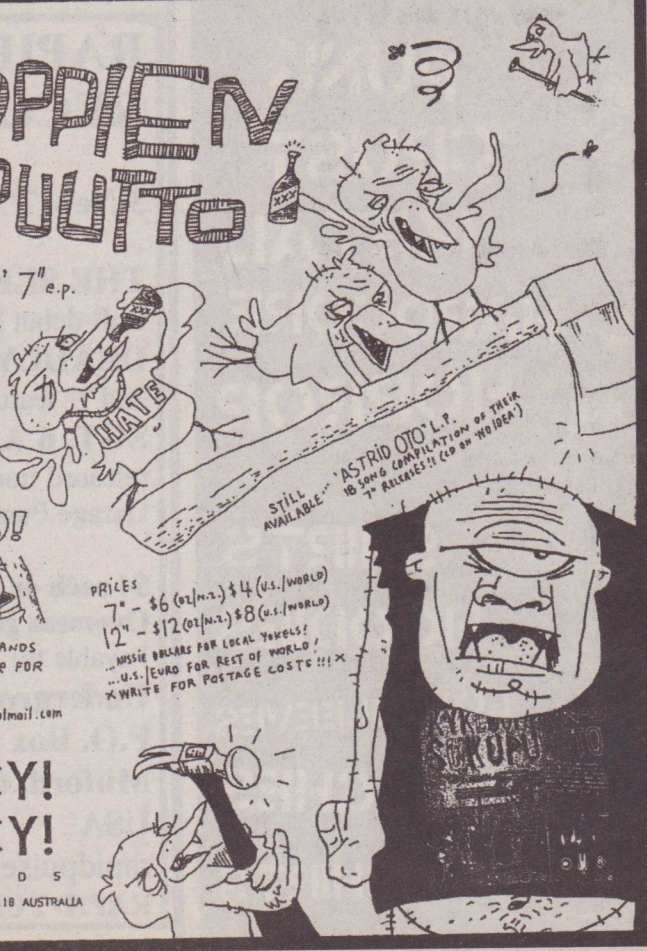

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LETTERS

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Dear MRR—
This letter is to the person who wrote the Michigan scene report in the last issue of *MRR*, "Jennifer Granholm" a.k.a. Jason from Pub Life.

Nice scene report. Please note, we're the BILL BONDSMEN not MAN. Now I know why our name is never spelled right on those "elaborate flyers" you draw. *Flesh Wave* fanzine appears to be dead. Flesh Wave EP 001 from local hardcore punk rippers GODDAMN! coming soon I hear. Fans of Solger, Youth Brigade DC, FU's (minus the political hoopla) etc., will love 'em.

While claiming I blabber about my band too much you plugged yourself and your band at least three times in one swoop. Wocka wocka.

No hard feelings. Just sayin...
—Gabby/Bill Bondsmen

Dear MRR—
I've been reading on and off (mostly on) for the last five years or so, and I must say, you people put together a fuckin' awesome zine! But, I must say my biggest complaint is not so much directed at you folks, but to the people who send things in to be reviewed.

Let me just say, it's mind-numbingly irritating to go through the process of reading reviews, writing to distros/labels for prices and then either A) it gets fucking returned because the turd that sent it in didn't give the right address or B) they get it, send you a response, and then you have to wait again once you send the money. OK, people sending shit in to get reviewed... *THAT'S FUCKING ANNOYING!* Send the correct address, and make sure to *tell the reviewer how much the record costs*! Back and forth mailing for something you should only have to do once is ridiculous. Submitters, labels, and distros...get your shit together!

On a lighter note, my label/distro is getting ready to release its first record. It's a vinyl comp of hardcore/punk bands that fucking love to skate! It's called *Taking Back the Skatepark! Vol. 1*. So far, I've got Reproach (from Holland), Rat Byte, Alert! Alert! (RIP), ANS, etc. I haven't quite filled out the record so I'm looking for more bands interested in contributing. The material can be old or new (preferably new) and the only condition is the song should be about rippin' it up, or a song you could picture people getting amped up to while skating. No slow shit, *please*! I'm looking to get it out in the next couple of months (or as soon as I fill the roster). Any submissions I like, but run out of room for will make it onto Volume 2. So send your song, along with lyrics, and any and all pictures of you and your bandmates/friends rippin' it up!
Skate to Live, Live to Skate!,
—George Ripper

Send submissions to:
Criminal Mischief Rekordz
c/o George Ripper
PO Box 88 [Just a coincidence, don't get retarded]
New Haven, CT 06501-0088, USA

P.S. I almost forgot bands should also send contact info for people who get the comp and wanna get in touch.

Hey MRR—
Mike Bullshit here. This is just a quick note to let everyone know that GO! is getting back together after an almost fifteen year absense.

GO! was around from 1989-1991, releasing a ton of 7" EPs and an LP/CD, *Existence*, which collected most of them, and toured the US and Europe. At that time I was also writing for MRR and booking the shows at ABC No Rio. We dealt with a lot of stuff—racism, sexism, violence in the scene, cultural relativism, interpersonal whatever, etc.—and were also the first NYHC band to bring up gay and lesbian rights. And we were pretty sarcastic and fun, too, which made all that a little easier.

So, we're writing new songs and will record a new 7" EP/mini-CD and play some shows in NY in July. The biggie is ABC No Rio July 8, 2006. It's possible we'll do a little West Coast thing this year.

This is all kind of weird, since I live in San Jose, CA; Aaron lives in Seattle, WA; Steve lives in Yonkers, and Jim is in NYC. But we're all really excited about this and we'll make it work somehow.

To stay in contact with the band go to www.myspace.com/gonyhc — I've been blogging there a bit. Also check out our webpage at www.designbymike.com/go. You can email me at mike@designbymike.com, or write to Mike BS. 540 Leland Avenue. San Jose, CA 95128. I have copies of our LP and CD, and will have T-shirts, stickers, etc. soon.

It's been great reconnecting with so many people over the last couple of months. It's good to be back.
All the best,
—Mike Bullshit

MRR—
La Rivolta! is back. The second annual La Rivolta! festival is in the works. The collective is looking for ideas for new

workshops and events for this year's anarcha-feminist festival in Boston, on March 4th. If you have a workshop or event idea, please contact the La Rivolta! collective at dumett@bu.edu. For history, info, and what La Rivolta! is all about, please see our website.
Solid,
—La Rivolta!!
www.larivolta.org

Dear MRR—
Has anyone noticed that Sparks is destroying the punk scene? For fuks sake! Sometimes, after drinking 14 hours straight, passing out is something that needs to occur. Don't get me wrong. I believe a 24-hour plus binge is good for the soul. However, if you do it on Sparks, you didn't earn it!

I recently narrowly avoided prison and found myself on probation here in Michigan for the next year. (I got a sympathetic lawyer to take a payment plan.) If it wasn't for Sparks, I would have been passed out a while before my "unlawful incident." I beat up a Nazi who had come looking for me. I wasn't around so he punched my girlfriend. She can hold her own (and did), but when I found out about it I went to his house—home invasion, first degree. If not for Sparks, I would have beat his racist ass later. Maybe no home invasion. (Obviously the cops didn't arrest the Nazi.)

Since all this bullshit, I hear Bretton (the Nazi) raped and beat his girlfriend. I hope somebody gets a hold of this fuck soon!

(Bretton became a Nazi in prison. He has a "Smash Judaism" tat on his chest and a swastika on his arm. He told me he wasn't like that anymore, I offered to help pay to get them covered, but it seems he was still into them—obviously we parted ways.)

So Sparks may have started off a chain of events that led to a girl's rape. It's a stretch, I know, but try to keep an open mind.

Hey! To you annoying drunks who quote *Sid & Nancy* endlessly while inebriated. Stay away from Sparks! It makes you more annoying than thought possible. I was way into Sparks for a minute. It is possible to kick! Even if you have to go to AA, just tell yourself "No Sparks today mate, pass the Wild Turkey." Sparks is our new heroin (unless you're Gouka from Japan—those guys can keep up with the Sparks). We need to stop the Sparks before the Sparks stops the punks!
—Justus

Dear MRR—
I hate to be a complainer but it really bothers me when your music columns feature bands and labels like Century Media, Relapse, Cryptopsy, Nile, etc. I don't think *MRR* accepts ads from either of those labels but you sure give them a lot of free publicity. Likewise, the aforementioned bands have nothing to do with the punk/hardcore scene. They are metal and proud of it and have a ton of other mags to send their press releases to. (Sorry, Relapse fans, but reissues don't make you punk.) For those who don't know, *MRR's* music columns came into being because Tim Yo decided to narrow his definition of punk but he knew that completely excluding certain types of music would piss off the shitworkers and readers. Straight edge was just starting to go all chugga chugga and Tim never thought much of grind, so the metal column was created to keep that stuff out of the review section. Some death metal on actual underground labels slipped in, but for the most part it was supposed to feature bands with a metallic sound who had their roots and ideals based in punk/core—Unbroken, Agathocles, Psycho, etc. The same idea held for the emo column and whatever other columns appeared at the time. Tim's definitions became a little strict as time went on but I think we can all agree that *MRR* should stick to his original ideals and keep its focus on the punk scene.
Rock on with your bad selves,
—anonymous

Dear MRR—
This is a call for submissions for a new book by and about activists in the US. Basically we want this book to serve as a sort of reference for people in all sorts of activist scenes. We would like to have a bunch of interest groups featured in the book to show the breadth of American activism, since it often seems like we're all working in little bubbles, and aren't connected with other radical groups. We're looking for essays, comics, and interviews with and by people involved in creative resistance and radical groups and DIY scenes in the US.

Roughly, we are looking for input from people involved with: ARA, animal liberation, feminism, genderqueer, APOC, youth liberation and freeskools, infoshops and libraries, bike collectives, newspaper and (maga)zines, squatting, radical healthcare, DIY show spaces and community centers, immigrant rights, street parties, forest defense, urban greening, free and pirate radio, unions, Food Not Bombs, and prisoners' rights groups. (This list is not meant to be exclusive. If you are involved with, or know about, other groups we'd love to hear about them!)

We aim to collect a group of writings and representations of, and by, activists from around the United States, people involved in all sorts of every day resistance who work outside of "the system." (Although exceptions will be considered if you are involved in radical law or healthcare or other fields where it could be argued that results can be achieved by working within the system.)

We welcome submissions (essays, interviews, comics, etc.) by people of all genders, ethnicities, ages, sizes, and backgrounds. We need people who are interested in interviewing and transcribing recorded interviews as well as people who want to write essays or speak to an interviewer. The due date for all submissions is May 1, 2006. Please email diycollection@riseup.net for more info. Thanks!
—the DIY collection

DERANGED

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pro recording from re-union show May 2004

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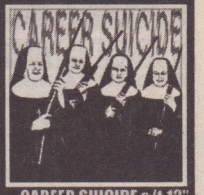

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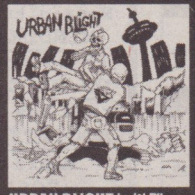
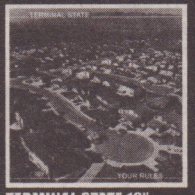


URBAN BLIGHT 's/t' 7"
new Toronto band doing straight forward HC



TERMINAL STATE 12"
snotty 80's hardcore from Toronto - again Toronto!

BURIAL 'never give...' CD
mix of Tragedy, Crude, Selfish & DeathSide

FUCKED UP 'epics' CD
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OBSERVERS 'where I stay' 7"
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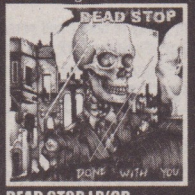

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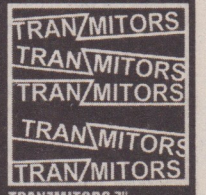

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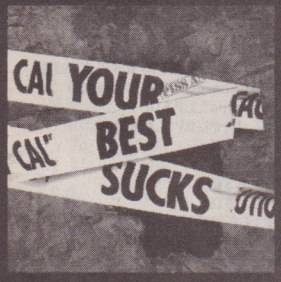

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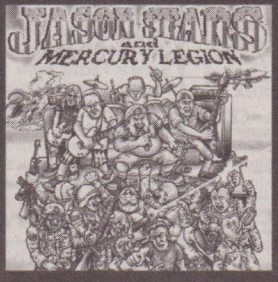

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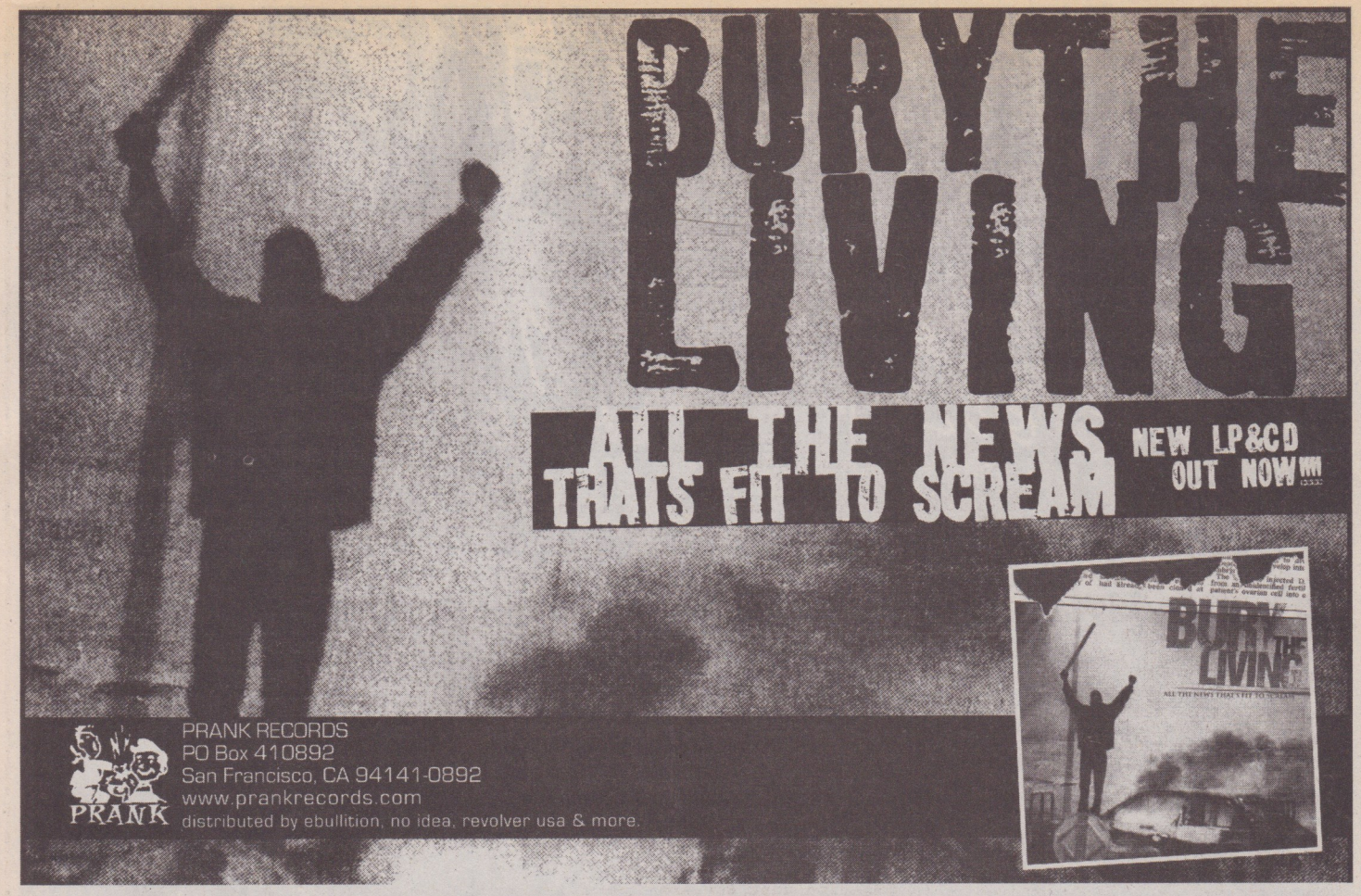

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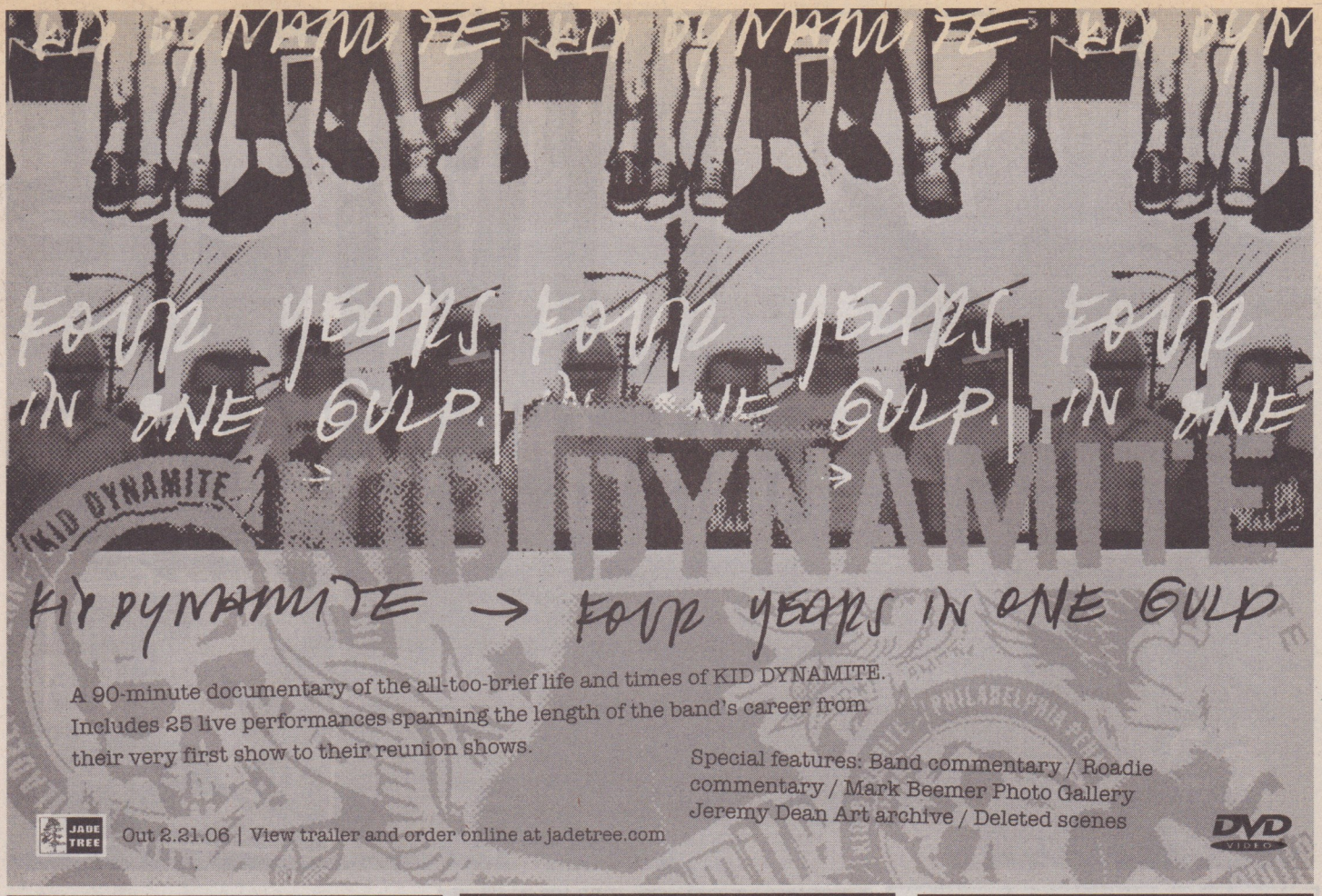

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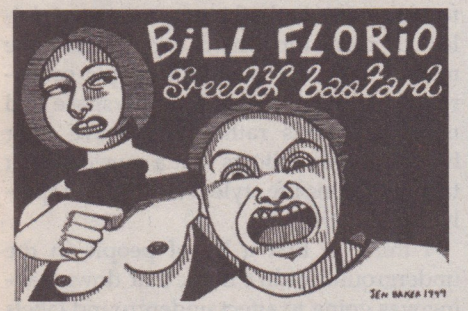


Eight months of Boy Scouts—that's all I could handle. Cub Scouts was all right; it was two years of sitting in some kid's basement with his mom entertaining everyone for a costume party. You sat around and glued shit together, made that stupid car out of a block of wood. I could handle that. Boy Scouts was going to a school gym on Tuesday nights, where everyone's dad was in charge; it was a whole 'nother world there. I blocked a lot of it out. Just about all the Cub Scout kids quit after a month or so, but I never quit anything before. It wasn't that my parents were forcing me to go, I just always had this non-quitter thing ingrained in me. The problem was, bad thoughts of the Boy Scouts were always there too. See, my dad was a Sea Cadet from say age 11 to age 30. Sea Cadets is not the Boy Scouts. Let me give you each organization's purpose as stated in their manuals:

The purpose of the Boy Scouts of America is to provide an educational program for boys and young adults to build character, to train in the responsibilities of participating citizenship, and to develop personal fitness.

Compared to: *The Naval Sea Cadet Corps is for American youth who have a desire to learn about the Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard and Merchant Marine. The objectives of the Sea Cadet program are to introduce youth to naval life, to develop in them a sense of pride, patriotism, courage, and self-reliance, and to maintain an environment free of drugs and gangs. Depending on the rate achieved in the Naval Sea Cadets, former cadets may be eligible to enlist in the armed forces at an advanced pay grade.*

From age three to say, nine or so, I pretty much hung out with my dad as he ran Sea Cadets in the Bronx, but by the time I was 11 or 12, my dad worked a lot and all my friends lived in Yonkers, so I ended up in Cub Scouts, even though from the time I was the little kid who hung out at Sea Cadet camping trips, all I had heard were things referring to Boy Scouts as wimpy nerdy kids that cooked beans in the can and drank their own pee.

Then you had this whole class/theological element to each group. Sea Cadets were mostly Irish, Italian, Black, and Hispanic kids from the Bronx, and it was held in the gym of a Catholic Church. You learned how to shine boots and do gun drills. Boy Scouts were almost all Germans in a Lutheran Church—well, maybe two Koreans—and you played volleyball and did odd science experiments. The thing is, after all these months, I had a concussion, split lips, black eyes, and took a lot of abuse in general from the Gestapo dads and their Nazi Youth children. I mean maybe it was because I was seven and my dad was in charge, but all the Sea Cadet kids seemed much nicer even though what they did actually resembled a paramilitary operation.

So one night I put my stupid uniform on and I remember sitting on the toilet thinking about how I was already 15 minutes late for the meeting, and I just broke into tears sitting there on the bowl. My mom knocked on the door and I was like, "That's it, I'm quitting." My mom is usually somewhat of a pain in the ass on these things, like there's no way in hell I'd get sympathy for doing that 10 minutes before I had to go to school, but my parents were actually all right with it, and I seem to remember them trying to make me feel better about quitting the whole thing; I'm sure they had their own reservations with me hanging out with the Nazi bastards on a weekly basis in the first place.

I thought about all this today when my friend Kelly told me about her recently quitting a band called GOOD CLEAN FUN. The conversation went something like this:

Me: Whatcha doing?

Kelly: Buying a van. I need to make sure I tour now that I quit Shitbag's band. Dude, he started claiming we fucked. He's so gross.

Me: Wow, that's so *Sixteen Candles.*

Kelly: Yeah. He's fat and oooky and dirty and gross They leave for Europe today. Fuckers.

Me: Did he tell people you fucked and that's why you quit, or did you quit and then he told people that?

Kelly: Well, I refused to keep playing at one show because kids were getting brutalized, and he would not do anything about it… Like fourteen-year-old girls getting punched and shit. And so the guitarist got mad and said, "If she's going to Europe, I'm not."

Me: Aren't fourteen-year-old girls at hardcore shows there *because* they like to get punched?

Kelly: Ha ha. Not funny, Bill. So he wanted me gone. And he wanted to keep Justin (my best friend/bass player). So he concocted this crazy shit about us dating to make Justin mad and hate me. But it backfired, because who would believe my standards are *that* low? But these hardcore bands sings songs about "positivity" and nonviolence.

Me: I think even bands from Cleveland sing about those things. But who wants to go to a non-violent hardcore show? I mean, if the dude from AVAIL punched me in the face, why would you think GOOD CLEAN FUN would actually be about good clean fun? That defeats the whole purpose of playing mosh-core, doesn't it?

Kelly: Issa and his female-empowering songs…and his attempts to womanize, I mean. Did I tell you about the night he got pissed that I would not sleep alone in the motel with him? Kids'd be so pissed if they knew the drummer is not vegan or edge and the kids they got to fill in on bass is pro-life.

Me: Somehow I doubt that kids who punch small girls get that uppity about what people eat. Is he Russian or something?

Kelly: He's half Jewish, half Muslim, but I don't know his exact ethnicity. His dad is

of some African decent, I think. I don't know.

Me: He sounds like he cut his dick off and shoved it in his own ass, if my racist math equation was put to the test.

Then I started thinking about the whole quitting thing, and Scouts, and how sometimes we like to look at everything through some sort of magic glasses. Like, "Man, these kids from who-knows-where love the same bands as me—they'd never steal things from my apartment if I let them stay here. Hey, she's a vegetarian—she must care about her fellow human beings just as much as she loves animals. This band just released a DVD explaining the evils of the music industry—I'm sure they'd never sign to a record label owned by Warner Brothers…"

There's always a conflict because if you leave the glasses off, you end up never having any fun; you become your own party pooper, not to mention everyone else's. If you fail to stop and look at things realistically, sometimes you don't realize how fucked you were until you see the leaking condom fall out of your corn-hole.

OK, now this really gets psychotic, because Kelly's from Salt Lake City and Joe Smith wrote the Mormon Bible wearing actual magic glasses (and Jesus invented the table), and the Mormon's own half of the Boy Scouts of America. And when you think about things too much you start realizing that the same powers that made me cry on the toilet are in cahoots with the civil rights trial concerning the injustice of banning homosexuals from wearing khaki short shorts with beaded lanyards and neckerchiefs. *Where is the logic in that?*

You know what? You get your ass off the commode, shake off the fact that both your legs have fallen asleep while you sat there bawling your eyes out, and you start all over again—a little smarter, a little more wary, but if you can't let these bastards ruin your good time. There are always new things to do, there are always new bands to join up with, new clubs to pay dues to, new stupid-looking outfits that make you feel like you have some common cause. In the end, this is America—everything about us is a contradiction, and if you really ponder your existence too much you will only end up depressed and ready to quit on everything. Wow, I feel like a foul-mouthed Mr. Rogers or something. OK, well, until next time, Neighbor!

bill@candids.com is where you can get my autograph. Cheap!

This month I want to take a break from hardcore to address something that has been at the forefront of my mind lately: The decline of independent record stores in America.

I spent over two months on tour in the USA this year, and as usual I visited every possible record store on our route. I've written about some of my favorite stores and how important I think independent stores are to the scene in this space before. This time around, hardly anyone I talked to had any good news for me. Independent stores are closing at a very rapid rate across the country, and those that remain are mostly barely holding on. Even at Extreme Noise, the all-volunteer, DIY record co-op in Minneapolis, sales are down close to 20 percent from last year and 40 percent from 2001. Extreme Noise is barely hanging in, despite having an all-volunteer staff and a good selection of new and used stock. I'd like to take some time to discuss the many factors that are undermining independent music retail.

The most important thing to note is that there isn't a single factor putting record stores out of business. There are numerous factors that combined make it very difficult to survive. I'll talk a little bit about store survival strategies later on. But there is no silver bullet or one-size-fits-all solution to the problem. Every city has a somewhat different music scene so factors that might weigh heavily on one store are trivial to another, but taken together they are driving most storeowners' backs up against the wall.

The most frequent culprit for the music business woes is downloading, file sharing, and home CD burning. While a lot of industry types like to blame these activities for all their problems, observers are quick to note that the industry survived the home taping scare of the late 70s and early 80s just fine. However, I think that the popularity of the iPod and digital music as a format in general have made downloading and file sharing more convenient, faster, and of course, cheaper than going to a store and buying music. A whole generation of young people has grown up never having had a stereo or record player, or making a weekly trip to a record store. They have no aesthetic attachment to vinyl or even compact disc. Except for a small segment who become more sophisticated in their musical tastes and buying habits, there is little hope for this generation changing their ways. If you can download dozens of records in an hour while you are hanging out on-line, and load the songs right to your iPod or listen to them instantly on your computer, all for free, why be bothered paying ten dollars or more for a hard copy of just one record? With thousands of people preferring to spend their days on Myspace and message boards rather than leave their homes, it only follows that a music format tailored to this life style would grow rapidly in popularity.

I think at first a lot of people in the underground didn't think that downloading was going to affect underground labels the way it did the majors. However, in the last year or so I think it has really caught up. Stores have long counted on sales of new release CDs as one of the major areas of revenue. For years, a store could count on selling dozens of copies a week, sometimes dozens a day, of a new release by a popular band like, say, Avail, Dillinger Four, Agnostic Front, or NOFX. Releases like this were well advertised and promoted with a large fan base, and storeowners could sell through case after case of them. Now new releases by popular artists still sell, but only a fraction of what they once did. Common wisdom says that a few diehards buy the CDs new, but most people are happy to burn them from friends or download them.

Furthermore, with the underground entering the mainstream in such a broad way as it has in the last few years, independent stores that used to be the only place to get new releases by popular independent artists now have to compete with major retail chains. There was a time when you had to go to an independent store to get hardcore punk or other underground releases. Now, with the hyper-commercialization of music, most of the popular and many of the marginal independent releases are available at chain stores like Best Buy or WalMart, often at or below the retailer's cost. Furthermore, one doesn't have to reach very far underground to hear aggressive or punk-inspired music anymore, as commercial versions of hardcore and punk such as Hatebreed and Rancid are mass-marketed and ubiquitous. Another thing to consider is that even a band that sells a few thousand copies these days attracts attention from major labels, and their releases

move up the distributor food chain to bigger distributors that independent stores have difficulty ordering from. Distributors that specialize in selling to chain stores often insist on minimum orders or that a store order by the case, etc. This pushes a lot of "major indie" artists that an independent store might have sold out of their price range and into the retail superstore chain environment. The declining retail environment is not limited to underground or independent stores either. Most chain music stores have gone bankrupt or are close to doing so. Even the discount superstores sell music at a loss or break even, and instead make their profit on music from selling advertising space in the store to record labels and from "co-op" payments from labels.

Keep in mind that in the early days of hardcore there was no cable TV, no home video systems, no video games except at arcades, no internet, and the mass marketing of youth culture was still in its infancy. Young people who weren't interested in sports or drugs usually turned to music and records for entertainment. Comic books and movie theatres were the main rivals. Now there are a lot of other factors competing for people's entertainment time and money: the internet, movies on DVD and VHS, video games, and free digital music. With all of these choices, only those who are really amped about music are still making the Friday afternoon trip to the record store to see what's happening. Indeed, the video game industry is now bigger than the music business, and one of the only sectors of the mainstream music business that still makes money is licensing songs to movies and video games.

I talked a few months ago about the fall of compact disc in this column. I think one of the decisive factors in many people's minds that led them to stop buying new music was the value-to-cost trade-off of the compact disc. The music industry switched to the higher priced "less for your money" CD format at the same time most mainstream music started to flow downstream from shitsville. Most consumers accurately maintained that it wasn't worth paying full price for a new CD to get the artist's one good song. In an age where most popular artists are one-hit wonders at best, digital music makes the playlist of only good songs sound a lot more appealing than high-priced full-length CDs of mostly filler. Ironically, one of the most profitable sectors in music retail remains used CDs. With skilled buyers a retailer can turn a much higher profit margin than new stock with traditional "buy low, sell high" tactics and still retail the used CDs for much less than their new counter parts. However, as more and more people dump their CD collections to help pay for their iPods, the price of used CDs is bound to drop, hereby robbing retailers of one of their most profitable/high turnover areas.

The other big winner for most independent stores is quality used vinyl. When less sophisticated buyers are leaving for digital, diehard fans and collectors remain the backbone of any store's customer base. Collectors are the one group willing to consistently pay good money for quality vinyl and often comb through local stores several times a week looking to score. However, as we have discussed in this column in the past, the internet and online auctions have radically altered record collecting. Record store owners desperate to make ends meet can now cherry pick the best of their used stock and sell it on-line for the maximum possible amount to the highest bidder. While this results in a much-needed stream of revenue for the store, it simultaneously alienates the store's most loyal customer base. Time and time again, I hear fellow collectors saying, "That store is picked clean" or, "He sells all the good stuff on eBay." The storeowners retort that if they were to sell rare records below the inflated eBay prices, local collectors would just buy them and resell them on-line themselves. This process is infuriating on both sides of the counter.

From my experience working at Extreme Noise, quality used vinyl is in extremely high demand. Good used records sell within hours of hitting the floor. The supply of hardcore punk vinyl, especially from the early 80s, is finite, but the demand continues to rise and prices have gone up accordingly. There is a huge fan base for good punk music, but bands and labels stubbornly refuse to re-issue material, or do so only on the CD format. There is in fact considerable evidence that a CD re-issue actually increases demand for vinyl editions. It's not surprising that bootlegs and re-issues consistently outsell all but a handful of new releases. Bootleggers are currently making fortunes because bands and labels sit on their back catalog. Keeping on top of hot new releases, re-issues, and bootlegs, and having good used stock, are sure ways most of the stores that aren't in crisis survive. Another factor, not much examined, is that people spending all their money on rare records on eBay have little left over to spend on new releases at the local record store. But all this looking at punk's past brings me to my next point.

In today's over-saturated market there are more bands and releases than ever before. Thousands and thousands of bands, tens of thousands of new CDs and records every year. This is a factor I've discussed several times in this column. In this tidal wave of independent releases, many would argue that there are only a handful of standouts. That is to say, there are a ton of bands today, but not many records worth buying. The lack of current records that can stand up to the classics is pretty profound. Most people would rather buy an Adolescents or Black Flag record that has stood the test of time than gamble on a new band that has maybe one or two good songs on an LP, two 7"s, and four splits. From the store's perspective, this means that stocking everything people could want is almost impossible. There are tried and true releases and a few popular new bands, but to have every genre represented in depth means investing huge sums on records that only *might* sell.

This leads me to another factor—the new release window and the restock shortfall. Most new releases are "new" for only a few weeks before becoming old news. Stores that in the past may have ordered five or ten copies of a new release, now only have the budget to order one or two copies of ten different new releases. And once those sell, instead of being restocked, they are likely to never be ordered again, as more new releases are coming every month. This means, for the customer, that if you aren't quick on the draw, chances of them having much of what you want are limited. And it's more and more difficult for even the most informed buyer to predict which titles will continue to sell and which have hit the wall. Few stores these days can afford to stock hundreds of titles that *might* sell, only the records they *know* will sell. The end result is that as the possible selection increases, the chances of finding what you are looking for at a store, decreases.

Another factor I've noted is that with so many bands putting out records and going on tour, a lot of people who possibly would have been buying other bands' records in the past are saving their money up to put out their own records. Also, as a significant portion of the punk scene is now older, there seems to be a certain point at which a lot of people move from being active to passive fans. That is to say, they graduate to becoming "bar punks" who spend their money on beer and nice punk outfits rather

than records, fanzines, or shows. This leaves a customer base of mostly enthusiastic young kids and jaded old collectors, as opposed to a broad cross-section.

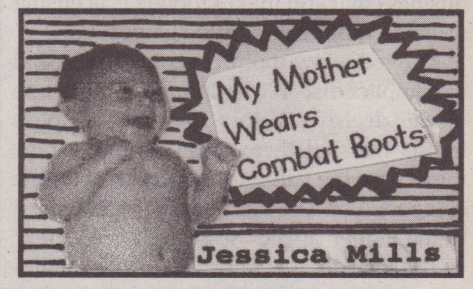
Which leads me to competition from on-line sales. Even the most multifaceted store with the most diverse stock can't compete against the whole of the internet for selection, or often for price. Internet retailers operating on a lower overhead can offer a broad selection more cheaply than most retail outlets. Furthermore, most labels and bands are selling their releases directly on-line as well. In the past, a loyal customer who didn't find what they wanted at a store would have to special order it from the store. Now if the store is out of stock, the customer can just go home and search on-line and order the release the same day. As we noted above, the chances of the store having everything all the time is slim. So with genres and subgenres splintering, it's easier and easier for small websites and distributors to cater to a narrow fan base, and harder for the store to do the same. And of course, as with digital music, in an era where many people spend their work days and much of their leisure time on-line, ordering records or CDs on-line is faster, easier, and often cheaper than going to the store.

Another factor that I don't think many people have factored in is shakeups on the distributor side of the equation. With so many labels and genres, there are no longer many benchmark "one stop" distributors that can keep a store well stocked. A store that relies too heavily on one or two distributors will artificially tilt their selection to the handful of exclusive labels carried by those distributors, thereby potentially not stocking dozens of genres and labels that customers might want. Furthermore, the shady business of record distribution means that many labels, sick of not getting paid and being ripped off by distributors, have pulled their stock or moved to different distributors. I know at Extreme Noise we have trouble keeping track of where to re-order sold out titles from as distributors go out of business and labels bounce around. A considerable number of the most in-demand labels refuse to use any distributors at all; Kick N Punch is a good example. Many of the best releases are not available to stores through traditional distribution channels, since the labels have no trouble selling all their copies mail order and on-line. This means many distributors are left with only a good selection of the more mediocre labels and releases.

When I was younger I went to several record stores every week. I spend every dollar I had at stores like Vinyl Ink and Yesterday and Today, both now out of business. In the 80s the main problem was there were more good records to buy than I could afford. Now, I have enough cash to buy most records I would want, but no matter how many record stores I go to, I rarely find anything worth buying. The days of scoring great records and good prices are mostly over. Most stores are picked clean, and any good new records to come in are snagged quickly or go straight to eBay. Which brings me to my last point. Stores faced with precipitously declining sales have to struggle just to pay their rent. As sales decline, the available budget to buy new releases shrinks. Customers are frustrated because the store never gets any new records and the store is frustrated because its sales continue to fall. At a certain point the ratio becomes unbearable and the store fails. More and more store-owners have realized that they need a survival strategy to cope, because almost no one is making it on just retail sales.

Some of the most common survival strategies are stores starting labels of their own, or using their space to promote shows. A lot of stores are subsidized by labels because they can trade their releases for other labels' stock instead of laying out cash. This is, of course, the same pattern most label-based distros operate under and it can help underwrite some of the costs of bringing in new stock. However, as we have seen, the last few years haven't been the best for independent labels either, and these days it's probably just as easy to lose money running a label as it is doing a store. Using space in the store to promote shows is a good way to bring in potential customers and possibly some extra income. But the unwillingness of most showgoers to pay more than a sub-subsistence door price, coupled with problems like people trashing and disrespecting the store, often make this more of a hassle than it's worth. Some stores move into on-line sales, which as we pointed out above, can be a double-edged sword. Many close up shop completely and just sell on-line from their homes, which works as long as they can keep new stock coming in, something that's difficult to do without a store front advertising "we buy used records." Some stores these days sell as much or more clothing and accessories than records. I know places like Smash, Radiation, Dr. Strange and Cash for Chaos have a full line of shoes, shirts, bondage pants, etc. For a generation of kids weaned on free digital music and raised in an image-conscious era such as this, clothing and accessories are their connection to the culture, rather than records or magazines.

Ironically, a lot of mail orders have told me that they are doing more business than ever. I would retort that this is not because the popularity of hardcore has increased, but just because there are now fewer stores for most people to go to. A distributor told me that the list of stores they serviced had declined from more than 2,000 to fewer than 1,500 just in the last year. A local record store helps serve as an anchor to a music scene. When the store goes under, the scene is almost always affected negatively. There are fewer new records, bands, or shows, and fewer opportunities for new fans to discover underground music. Just as the rest of American society is being undermined by corporate culture with it's lowest common denominator appeal, so too is independent music retail. WalMart puts local retailers out of business when they move into a community, and neighborhood hardware and video stores go under when faced with competition from corporate chains like Home Depot and Blockbuster. The drive by corporations for the cheapest possible products at the lowest cost to appeal to the widest possible audience results in a chillingly banal, almost Soviet-style culture devoid of any taste, style, creative spark or substance. As local stores with their informed staff and diverse selection leave the landscape, the bleak future of chain retail offering only the major label version of hardcore is becoming a reality.



Dazed and Confused

This column was contributed by Tom Moniz, from his forthcoming zine, *rad dad* #3, due out in March 2006. He's looking for more submissions. Suggestions, comments, stories all welcome: tom_moniz@riseup.net

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I need help. I'm desperate. I'm even turning to those self-help parenting books with names like *You Be the Boss* and *Take Back Control of your Family* (note picture with white mother and father and grumpy-

looking suburban white boy). I'm looking at them and saying, "Yes! Save me." My god, how far we fall—but desperate times call for desperate measures.

But enough with clichés; let's get to the point—as an anarchist anti-authoritarian father trying to bridge that gap between theory and practice, trying to connect my politics to the practice of living my daily life, I've never met this kind of challenge before. And it feels like I am failing.

Being vegan in New Mexico with my entire Chicano family holding out a plate full of carne asada, saying, "You don't eat *what*?" was easier. Struggling with the reality of non-monogamy has been easier. Struggling to navigate being a teacher within the cold walls of the classroom was a piece of vegan chocolate cake compared to this.

My son. Beautiful. On the verge of manhood. So much energy, so much potential. Stoned. Not doing what he said he'd do, no schoolwork, no responsibilities around the dog, not caring about skating anymore, wanting to be flossin' a new white tee, khaki Dickies, wanting clean white Nikes, talking about getting a grill with ice on it. But that's not the worse thing.

Lying about it. That was the clincher. I needed serious help. He seemed more comfortable making up extravagant explanations for me rather than talking to me about his choices, his decisions, his willingness to take the consequences if need be. Instead I got, "No really, I just took this bud from a friend cuz I didn't want him to smoke, cuz, you know, drugs are bad," followed by his sad little smile. Help me!

So I was talking through this stuff with a good friend of mine and he chided me, asking, "Really, what do you expect? Him to be all, '*Yo pops, I'm fix to roll a fat one with me and my boys, you want in?*'" Now, sarcasm aside, he had a point. I pride myself on fostering an environment in which my son and my daughters can be active participants in creating their surroundings, and this worked when every option they had was something I was comfortable with, for the most part. "You wanna wear a tank top when it's raining? Well, try it and see," or "You wanna not eat when we're having dinner? Then don't expect me to do it all again when you're hungry in a couple hours."

But there was no deception, no dishonesty in any of these situations. Until now.

"Hey dad, I need to stop by my girlfriend's house to pick up a calculator." I want him to do well, so I feel I must help him. However begrudgingly, I get all the other kids in my car, which I need to jumpstart to get going, drive there, wait an excruciating ten minutes, and then have him get back in the car followed by an overpowering smell of rosehip hand soap. Hhmmm. A deep breath closer and sho nuff, weed. I see that this was all a ploy to get some "grapes," as the slang goes at Berkeley High. I ask him if he has pot on him. "No." He looks dumbfounded, like why on earth would I think such a thing. I ask him to empty his pockets. Out comes some of the nastiest, weak-ass shank I've ever seen. I almost asked him how much he paid for this because he got robbed. Then I hear his excuse: "I was wrestling with some friends in the field, so it must be grass."

Am I that much of a fool, I wonder? Is this what I get for doing what I did to my own mom? I just want to ridicule him, chide him for thinking me so gullible. You know, parenting by shame. And then it hits me.

This is where politics in action collide with theory. This is the battleground where decisions made now can either reflect the parenting most of us are familiar with—parenting based on hypocrisy, blanket authoritarianism, on fucking guilt—or my choices can reflect…and that's where I'm stuck. *Or what?*

How else to handle this, other than those rigid patriarchal static options—yelling, screaming, shaming, threatening? Or worse yet, the banal liberal crap that I hear some people (usually non-parents) rattle off about how they'll let them smoke or even smoke with them. So do I let my son smoke pot any ol' time? Do I say, "No, drugs are bad," like the good ol' South Park counselor? I know they're not. I don't smoke pot, but I have and certainly will do it again. Do I say, "You can do it in your room only," and then have to deal with a stoned son at dinnertime? Nothing sounds good; nothing feels right.

Where is my little four-year-old who wants pirate parties, where the only thing smoking will be the tip of his little pirate pistol?

But we change. Kids grow up. They make their own decisions and must face the consequences of those decisions on their own. I tell him in the car, "I will talk to you about this later tonight when I'm not so upset." In the meantime, I remind myself that I don't have all the answers, that this is so much more complex then just him smoking pot or lying or trust. I also remind myself that my responsibility is first and foremost to let him know I love him unconditionally. I don't want my anger or my disappointment to pervade my other interactions with him. After being flat-out lied to like a fool, I still must make him dinner, sit and eat with him and my daughters in a respectful and supportive environment. This sounds obvious or simple, but it is probably the most difficult thing I have to do. To keep these things separate – my anger at one thing and my behavior to him in other areas. To not ridicule him when he comes into the kitchen announcing, "Man, am I hungry," by saying, "Well, that's what you get when you're a fucking pothead" or something like, "It's called the munchies, stoner."

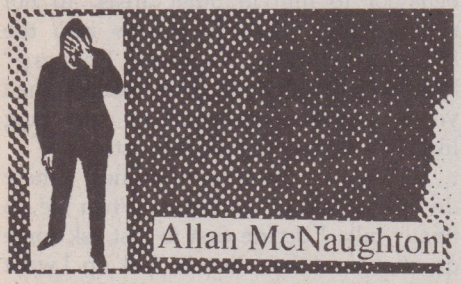
So what are my responsibilities? Where do mine end and his begin? When we do finally talk, I decide first to just ask some questions and then shut the fuck up. I want to just listen, not blame, guilt, threaten, ignore, and dismiss him, his feelings, or his actions. I ask, "Do you like it? How's it make you feel? Do you think it affects you negatively in any way? Do you know what might happen if you get caught with it on BART, in school, buying or selling? Do you want to know my experiences with it?" We talk like this a few times over the next couple of days.

I still don't know what to do and feel lost, so I finally try to figure out what I feel I need as a parent, what I feel my responsibilities are, and just what my concerns or fears are. I tell him I don't want him doing it and I don't think it is helping him succeed in the choices he's made for himself at this point. I tell him of my fear about how this society is ready to pounce on young men, criminalize them and their actions, and that he's already been caught for graffiti and shoplifting (*Did pot cause this?* I laugh to myself), and soon will be out of options. I reiterate that he needs to make his own decisions and he needs to deal with the consequences.

I kinda wanna use my line I used when I saw him looking at pornography, "If you're old enough to watch it, you're old enough to talk about it openly and honestly." I need him to be honest with me, to not deceive me. If I ask him, he should be truthful. Part of the consequences of his actions is owning them, regardless of people's reactions, even his father's. I tell him that being honest doesn't mean he has no privacy. He is his own person and knows what is expected of him. If he can balance doing what he needs to do with the other choices he wants to make, great. If he can't, then we need to rework our system; we need to question both what I expect and his choices. If we can be honest with each other

now, we can learn to understand, support, and disagree with each other while still maintaining our autonomy and our connection.

However, none of that will make walking into my son's room with him sitting on the bed stoned out of his mind with Mickey D wrappers about the floor any fucking easier.



When I was but a young lad I used to lie on my bed listening to Agent Orange and reading *BMX Action* and *Thrasher*, dreaming wistfully of California. Ahh, California: the endless smooth concrete of the sidewalks; the bountiful skateparks like the Pipeline and Uplands; the California of Bones Brigade videos and JFA adverts (I know JFA aren't from California, but I associated their adverts with the lifestyle I coveted. I actually think I prefer those old Placebo ads to any of the records.) Every day would be spent carving a fullpipe in the desert with your mates, followed by the Black Flag/Minutemen/Hüsker Dü triple bill, and then if you were lucky you might cop a feel off some blonde-haired surfer vixen in the back of her VW van.

Eventually I did move to California in search of a better life and discovered that it wasn't the place of my daydreams. Still, I've definitely had it better than most. The California I imagined from TV and the rest of the media was indeed different from the reality I experienced, but I believe that there are some people who do live in that glamorous reality. There actually do exist people whose lives resemble an episode of *The OC* (if you've never seen that, it's a TV soap opera revolving around the lives of rich, spoiled teenagers in a wealthy beach town in Southern California, and something of a guilty pleasure of mine.)

When people visit the US from Europe or Japan they often marvel at how cheap everything is here. Just as Americans have gotten used to being able to buy gas at artificially cheap prices, just about everything else we buy is subsidized by the low wages made possible by cheap overseas labor and a tacit acceptance by industry of illegal immigration. Oh yes, Republicans and Democrats alike will make noise from time to time about stamping out illegal immigration, but capital needs a steady flow of labor, and there's nothing it loves more than labor that's willing to work with few legal rights, no benefits, and below-market wages, and that won't make waves for fear of being deported.

Which brings us to the Minutemen. Not the seminal San Pedro band that you might generally expect to hear of in my column, but the loosely organized bands of vigilantes that have sprung up in Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, California, and even on the Canadian border from Washington to North Dakota. Armed and dangerous, they have taken it upon themselves to patrol the borders and round up illegal immigrants, and have garnered publicity for videotaping migrant day laborers and those who hire them and reporting them to the INS and IRS. They've focused a lot of attention lately on the business owners who hire the day laborers, claiming that they are taking advantage of the workers when they ought to be hiring people legally and paying for benefits and healthcare and such like. I don't disagree with this, and I certainly don't think that people who hire illegal immigrants are doing so out of a sense of charity. But the fact that the Minutemen's tactics have served mainly to victimize people who are far below poverty level and are struggling to provide the barest of necessities for themselves and their families is mean-spirited to say the least. They have denied charges of racism, but such people always do. They want to be seen as decent people doing their civic duty to defend their way of life, but goad them a little and the teeth start to show. The terminology favored by anti-immigration activists is designed to elicit fear of some catastrophe or other. They often talk of a deluge of immigrants, of a flood of people coming over the border. I certainly don't equate the dangerous activity of trying to make your way from Central or South America to a new life in the USA, with the hazards of border guards, vigilantes, coyotes, exploitative bosses, human traffickers, foremen who routinely rape their female workers, with a flood. Anyone who risks these dangers—risks their life—just to provide a better life for their family, has earned, at the very least, better treatment from their new neighbors, if not the bare minimum of human respect.

As an immigrant (albeit a honky whose transition to this country went fairly smoothly) this issue is very close to my heart. I find that borders provide nothing but trouble. I don't like them and think it would be a better world if all borders were opened immediately. I have, however, noticed that not all borders are the same. As a youth I traveled back and forth across the border with England frequently. No one bats an eyelid although one's accent might invite comment, or a ten-pound note from a Scottish bank might draw a suspicious glance despite being completely legal tender (Maybe the suspicion derives from the unlikelihood of anyone from Scotland actually having ten pounds.) Similarly, driving around Europe, the borders are policed, but for the most part, it's rarely more than a matter of routine. Workers from anywhere in the European Union can legally take their labor wherever they like within the Union (not that I'm suggesting that Europe doesn't have its own problems with immigration—the recent riots in France demonstrated their lack of *egalité*.) There's a palpable difference between borders (such as those between wealthy Western European nations) that aren't really policed or contested, and borders (such as the one between the USA and Mexico) that represent more than just the point where one country ends and the other starts. Drive along US 10 from El Paso, TX towards Las Cruces, NM, with the Rio Grande on your left and beyond it, the slum villages of Juarez, and it becomes clear that this border represents a life of wealth and opportunity that many will never see. It's a pretty barren expanse of land, no fences or armed guards that I could see, at least during the day, but the simple knowledge that the imaginary dotted line that can only be viewed on a map is there feels like violence. It feels like goading, like bullying, like a dare.

Like most problems, it's complex, and there are no quick and easy solutions that will satisfy everyone. Too many people have a vested interest in maintaining a façade of strict border control and resistance to immigration while turning a blind eye to the exploitation and modern-day slavery of those who do make it over the border. The American middle-class lifestyle of cheap consumer goods, cheap food, and cheap gas depends on this exploitation, so it will probably continue until the masses become bored and disillusioned with the ease and luxury of their consumerist, TV-driven lives and turn instead to the betterment of society as a whole, and particularly the lower classes. So, probably in the next couple of weeks then.

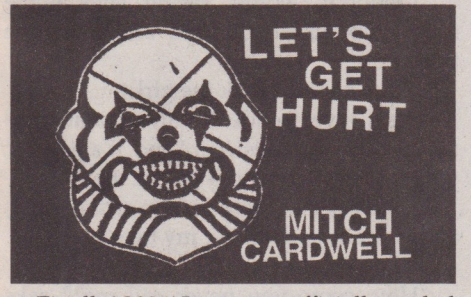
***

I do realize that messrs. Boon, Watt, and Hurley named themselves the Minutemen ironically, after the 60s militant anti-communist group, who in turn named themselves after the elite Revolutionary War militias, but it is still jarring to hear the name I so closely associate with the band that could be our lives linked with something so negative and hateful. I've read that D. Boon wrote the following lyrics (to *Corona*) on a trip to Mexico. Note the use of the words "our South" to refer to Mexico. Sure, there's a border there. Sure, it's technically another country. But the people over that border are humans just like us, so it is exactly that—"our South," as much as we are their North. North America, South America, these are just words.

The people will survive
In their environment
The dirt, scarcity, and the emptiness
Of our South
The injustice of our greed
The practice we inherit
The dirt, scarcity and the emptiness
Of our South
There on the beach
I could see it in her eyes
I only had a Corona
Five cent deposit

***

I didn't do a year-end top ten for this issue. Due to various obligations familial and otherwise I missed quite a few months of record reviews in 2005 and I feel like I've got a lot of catching up to do. Some of the best records of last year probably won't hit my turntable until mid-2006 and I don't feel like making an incomplete version. You can write to me and tell me about great records I may have missed last year at PO Box 22971, Oakland, CA 94609 / allan@dropout.cc, but I'm guessing you probably won't.



Finally! 2006! I can now officially re-dedicate myself to punkish responsibilities with renewed vigor and further attention to detail! I can hopelessly dive headfirst into piles of Nuevo-Scum vinyl and not feel bad about my life being a complete waste of time! Let's hear it for failure and collector fetishes! Let's hear it for overpriced import singles that you can only buy via PayPal! Let's hear it for colored vinyl email reservations! Let's hear it for incredibly expensive reissues that feature crap-sounding live material and shitty liners! Somebody fucking shoot me in the face!

One thing that I've noticed lately is that power-pop bands are springing up all over the fucking place (and, perhaps most notably, MySpace). You got yer YOUNG PLAYTHINGS, PLASTIC LETTERS, ELECTRIC SHADOWS, WEEKENDERS, NICE BOYS, and on and on and on. What gives? Now some of these bands are far better than others, but the first truly great new power pop single from this new breed comes to us courtesy of NYC's BABY SHAKES. Baby Shakes' debut 45, "Shake! Shake!" b/w "On A Friday" has just been released by the always-impressive Douche Master Records, and lemme tell ya, it delivers. Baby Shakes' female-fronted bubblegum-punk immediately brings to mind CANDYGIRL and NIKKI CORVETTE. Although highly catchy and sugary-sweet, the junkie guitar running throughout keeps things interesting and different enough to make Baby Shakes tougher and punker than their hot pink sleeve and smiley portraits would let on. 500 copies total, 100 on pink wax…don't miss out.

Plastic Idol Records keeps their string of fantastic 7" EPs going with the *Let's Not Have A Party* 7"EP, a new single from one of my favorite French bands, ANTEENAGERS MC. In one of my very first columns for *MRR*, I gushed and gushed over this band and I'm happy to report that I feel that same enthusiasm over this new single. As you may or may not know, ANTEENAGERS MC features members of STEVE AND THE JERKS, FRUSTRATION, and the NO-TALENTS, otherwise known as card-carrying members of France's "Happy Family" punks. What makes this band so great is that they are seemingly everything at once, with traces of 60s garage, straight punk and post-punk weirdness blending together to make a sound that's as original and a exciting as anything you're likely to hear these days. This truly one of the elite bands in the world right now and *Let's Not Have A Party* is all the proof you'll need.

Another label on a roll is Paddy Bullocks' Your Permanent Records. Hot on the heels of the fantastic RAT TRAPS 7" EP comes the debut from New Hampshire's LIVE FAST DIE, the *Guitar Star* 7"EP. I saw what was supposedly LIVE FAST DIE's very first show at last year's Dot Dash BBQ and they did not disappoint. Featuring an all-star line-up of DC SNIPERS, BASEBALL FURIES, and ELECTRIC SHADOWS members, LIVE FAST DIE focuses on the same self-destructive, drug-addled catchiness that made the original JABBERS and their ilk household names. This is definitely a band that'll make a big splash in 2006 (LP coming soon on Dead Beat), so start here and get blown away. A totally great single!

On a related note, Paddy's band, THE SHOP FRONTS, just released their third single. The *So Sick* 7"EP, co-released by Noma Beach Records and Red Devil Records, features three short, straight-ahead burners that would fit nicely next your favorites in the Rip Off Records catalog. Coincidentally, The Shop Fronts will be releasing an LP on Rip Off sometime in 2006! Can't wait for that one! Anyway, *So Sick* is limited to 500 copies, with 100 copies on pink wax. Do I see a trend developing?

One of my favorite singles *ever* is the debut 7" EP from THE FEVERS that came out in 1998. Since then, they've released two absolutely stellar LPs and a handful of compilation tracks…but never returned to the format they were so deliciously perfect for. Until now. *BAM*! Get Hip Records (yeah, no shit) has just released "Don't Tell Me It's Wrong" b/w "He's In Town"—a 45 worthy of placement in any jukebox. Get Hip sensed this naturally and went ahead and included a sheet of those jukebox label tag thingies with the 7". Good thinkin'.

As far as LPs go, it's usually slim pickings at this time of year, but there is one new LP of note this month. Big Neck Records has finally released *Ready To Shake*, the debut LP by THE RADIO BEATS. Their DEVIL DOGS influence is totally up-front, but this LP is louder, meaner and faster than anything Andy G. and Crazy Stevie (who produces here) ever coughed up. They've got those lyrics from that big swinging dick macho school, which might turn off those not interested in hear an audio stag party blaring through their speakers. Either way, something's gonna get broken when you through this mother on.

Discussion of reissues and bootlegs will return next month with takes on the recent Rave-Up excavations and Euro obscuros like TAMPAX and JACK AND THE RIPPERS. See you then!

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"Freebird," I yell from the back of Manitoba's, the bar on Avenue A owned by the Dictators' lead singer.

"I can't believe you just yelled that," says the guy seated next to me at the bar, "you should have at least asked for 'Sweet Home Alabama.'"

I look at the guy. Long hair. Imported beer. What does he know.

"Freebird," I yell again, after a couple sips of my Rolling Rock.

"They won't play it, George," the guys says, "besides, you do a great version of that song with Furious George. I think you did it the last time we played together. At The Continental."

I look at the guy. I think I sort of remember him.

"You liked our version?" I ask him.

"Yeah," he says, as he drinks his frou-frou beer.

I begin to like the guy.

"Did someone yell 'Freebird'?" asks the guy on the makeshift stage at Manitoba's. It's actually just the floor, near the other end of the bar. With two mike-stands.

"Free-fucking-bird," I yell. Hell, a minute earlier, the guy was asking for requests. I see "Freebird" as the ultimate request. A song real men can play.

"Okay," says the guy on the floor at the other end of the bar, "you asked for it, and we'll play it!"

Suddenly I hear those sliding guitar notes. Skynard's ultimate riff. I'm transported back to Florida for a few seconds. It's 1978. Actually, I was down there last year. It's still 1978.

"You asshole, now they are actually playing it!" says some Lisa Loeb-looking chick seated to my other side at the bar. She has the glasses and everything.

"Hey, baby," I say, "If you ever lived in Florida, you'd understand that 'Freebird' is the epitome of the South. The rage of all rednecks. The trucker's tune."

"You're full of shit. I grew up in Nashville. 'Freebird' sucks," she tells me.

"Oh, yeah?" I say, raising one eyebrow, and thinking about punching her in her librarian glasses. Why girls want to make themselves look purposely unattractive is beyond me. Behind her butt-ugly glasses this chick is pretty, like Lisa Loeb. But with the glasses, she looks like someone's granny. Maybe it's a lesbian thing. But I quickly dismiss that idea when I see her kiss her boyfriend.

"'Freebird' is shit," she tells me.

I look over to the long haired guy with the imported beer. He just smiles, somehow telling me, "I told you you should have yelled for 'Sweet Home Alabama.'"

Suddenly some girl near the "stage" stands up and starts yelling something in my direction. The back of the bar.

"What a rack," I say to the long-haired guy next to me.

He nods his head.

The girl starts to scream more and more, and waves at us.

"Ya think she's trying to get our attention?" I say to the guy.

"I dunno," he says. Musicians.

I look at her waving frantically. Maybe she's trying to say something to Lisa Loeb seated next to me. Or the chick with the pack of Camels on the bar, who's standing behind me. Or the other guy to my left.

The girl keeps waving, and I keep looking at her.

"I think she knows you," says Handsome Dick Manitoba, from behind the bar. His bar.

I give Handsome Dick the "whatever" nod and keep drinking my beer.

Actually I'm glad Richard "Handsome Dick" Manitoba opened his own bar. It gives us old punk rockers a cool place to hang out. And everyone knew it was Dick's dream to have his own bar one day, and he finally did it. With class. There is a really good sounding PA system, a huge television, an awesome upstairs, a comfy downstairs, and most importantly, huge deer or moose antlers on the wall. Can't have a bar called Manitoba's without the antlers. Oh, those, and the pictures of the Dictators hung strategically all over the place.

The girl at the other end of the bar continues to wave as I think about how proud I am of Manitoba opening his own bar. Most punks I know at his age are yuppies or are dead. Same difference.

But not Manitoba. Besides still kicking it with the Dictators, who basically coined the term "punk rock" along with The Ramones, Manitoba now has a place where everyone knows his name. They couldn't miss it. It's in bright blue neon letters in the bar's window.

Manitoba's.

And am I glad for that. Imagine if he'd called it "Handsome Dicks." Christ. Opening a bar like that on Avenue B would just be asking for a place with some real backroom action.

"Excuse me, but you sure are good-looking!"

"If you think I'm good-looking, have a look at my dick!"

"Wow, that's one Handsome Dick!"

Nope. Manitoba's is a much better name.

"Dude, she looks like she is going to throw something at you," says the long haired frou-frou beer-drinking musician next to me.

I look at the girl who has given up waving in our direction. She now has something in her hands, and is motioning like she is gonna throw it at us.

"I think she knows you," says Lisa Loeb.

All of a sudden the girl hurls something and it flies directly toward my head. I lift my hand up like I used to see Thurman Munson do, and try my best to catch the object like the old, dead, Number 15.

Of course I miss, and it clips the long-haired guy in the head before hitting the ground.

I look at the girl and she's pointing directly at me, mouthing the words, "pick it up."

The guy with the long hair does. It's a napkin.

We both open it and find nothing. Not even a note written in lipstick that says "fuck you" or "redrum."

The next thing I know the girl with the nice boobies is upon both of us, yelling that we lost the object inside the napkin.

She starts to look for whatever it is on the floor, and as she does, I can see down the back of her jeans. Nice ass.

"I think she knows you," says the long haired guy.

"She looks familiar," I lie back to him. She's about as familiar as he is.

"I found it, George," the girl yells, as she stands up and hands me a locket type thing.

"What's this?" I ask the girl.

"It's a silver pendent with a magic crystal inside," she tells me, "and it's just for you, George. To remind you of me."

I thank her politely for the strange gift, and go back to drinking my beer.

Whatever.

"How come you never call me?" asks the girl.

"Huh?" I say to her.

"I never see you around, and you never call. When we were together you couldn't keep your hands off me," she says.

"Do I know you?" I ask the twentyish

brunette with a body to die for.

"George," she says as she punches my shoulders with both hands, "It's me, Tina!"

"Tina?" I say, not knowing who in the hell "Tina" is.

"Yeah!" she says, then hugs me. Real hard. I can feel her erect nipples touch my T-shirt.

"So how have you been?" I ask her, not knowing who in the hell I'm talking to, and not really caring. As long as she hugs me again.

"Oh, okay," she says, "I've had some tough times lately, but who hasn't? Anyway, how's the band? How's Nick?"

How does she know Nick, my stepfather?

"Um, fine," I say to the pretty young thing.

"Do you think he ever heard us?" she asks.

"Heard us what?" I say, playing along like I even remotely know what the hell is going on.

"Fucking," she says.

Lisa Loeb overhears this and looks at me. The guy with the long hair misses this as he's busy talking to Manitoba.

"Fucking?" I repeat, stunned.

"Yeah, we were pretty loud in your old bedroom. I remember one time when I was really horny, I yelled really loud, and I think I heard your mom laughing."

I looked at this girl. I had to know her. Hell, I had to have slept with her. She knew about my old bedroom on West Fourth Street. About my mom and Nick. She had to be one of the dozen or so I had done that with. More or less. Probably less. But I don't want to brag.

But which one.

Tina?

Shit.

Didn't ring any bells.

"So what else is new with you?" I ask her, hoping she'll tip me off to some clue so my alcohol and pill-soaked brain could figure out this conundrum.

"Well, since you, Wendy, and your parents saw me in that movie at Anthology, I've done some other movie work," she explains, "In fact, I'm gonna be in a movie called *Redneck Rampage* this summer.

Anthology.

On Second Avenue.

That movie.

Wendy.

My parents.

Tina.

Holy shit.

Tina. My old girlfriend. Well, one of them. The one with the knockers that used to work at CBGBs when I did. She was so hot that all my friends went crazy over her. Eventually we broke up, for, among other reasons, her putting her lips on my guitarist.

Well, his penis.

And that night. At Anthology. That night. It all came back to me.

*

Tina had called my house to invite my parents and me and Wendy to a screening of a movie she had a starring role in.

"What kind of movie?" I asked her. After all, it was Tina.

"Oh, a full-length," she had told me. "It's about the Kennedy assassination."

"Cool," I told her.

She then told me I *had* to bring my parents and Wendy, my new girlfriend, that they'd love the movie. So I did.

Halfway through the awful art film, where they kept showing Tina as Jackie O, in the back of that car, I had told my mom that the movie wasn't very good, and perhaps we should sneak out while it was still dark in the theater.

"No, George," said my mom, "Tina was nice enough to call and invite all of us, so we'll watch the whole film."

My mom was nice like that. All considerate and shit. She didn't want to hurt Tina's feelings. She had liked Tina. Thought she was a bit much for me to handle, but liked her. Even after she found out that Tina had gone down on my fellow Letch Patroller while I was away on tour with The False Prophets.

"She's young, George," my mom had told me when she saw me breaking shit around my room in a jealous rage, "and young girls do that sort of thing."

As the movie continued, the art slowly turned to bad porn. Tina started to show up in the movie naked. I put my hands over my eyes as I was nestled between my mom and Wendy. Christ, the last thing I wanted them seeing was her burning bush.

"This kinda sucks," I said to both of them at one point, "Let's go!"

"I kinda like it," said Nick.

"Just like your naked 'art' books," I quipped back at him. I didn't want him seeing Tina's woo woo, either. My guitarist already had. And that was enough.

"George," my mom whispered to me, "I'm an adult, I can handle this kind of thing."

"But I can't," I told my mom. This had sort of happened before. My mom and Nick had taken my little brothers and I to see *Kentucky Fried Movie* when we were kids. It looked like a kiddy movie from the commercials. Once inside the theater, though, we saw bits like "Catholic High School Girls In Trouble," and that last bit where some chick fucks her boyfriend in front of some News Anchormen on television, who watch, drooling.

When the lights went on, I pretended I was asleep, as did my grandfather. I couldn't face the fact that I had watched people have sex with *my parents*.

And now it was worse. It wasn't only people having sex, it was Tina. And she was also pissing in a fishbowl, with the camera lens beneath it. And doing other gross things. With her vagina. And I had been in that vagina. With my fingers. With my penis. With my mouth. And my mom, Nick, and Wendy knew it.

I felt like dying.

Finally, the film ended and the lights went on. Everyone applauded, including my mom.

On the way out of the theater Tina stopped us, and asked us, innocently, what we had thought of her performance.

"You were great," said my mom, "you are truly a great actress!"

"Thanks, Barbara," said Tina, and then hugged and kissed us all good-bye.

For the next few days I couldn't even talk to my parents. And when I did, Nick made some crack about things smelling like fish belonging in fishbowls.

Ha ha.

*

"Aren't you gonna introduce me to your friend?" says Tina, as she looks at the guy with the long hair seated next to me at the bar.

I'm too stunned to say anything. I think the shock of seeing Tina, along with the night's drugs and booze had put me into a temporary coma.

"Hi," says Tina to the long haired foo-foo beer drinker, "I'm Tina."

He shakes her hand and tell her his name.

"You really should be more social, George," Tina tells me.

I nod my head in silence. I can't speak.

"Well," says Tina, "I'm going back up front to where the band is. Come talk to me later. I'll introduce you to my friends."

I nod my head, still tongue tied. Tina hugs me again, then walks away.

"Dude," says the long haired guy, "she's hot!"

I nod my head.

"Any requests?" asks the singer guy on stage into the mic.

I look at the long haired guy. Then at Lisa Loeb. She looks back at me and nar-

rows her eyes. I raise one eyebrow.

Then I clear my throat.

"Freebird," I think I yell.

"Huh?" the guy on stage says.

"Dude," says the long haired guy next to me, "why did you just yell 'fishbowl'?"

Take My Life, Please.

Endnotes:

1. www.georgetabb.com
2. Okay, there's a new band in town I really really like. They are called Paul Ryder & The Riots. Check them out on Myspace. There's a link from my page. Kinda like The Dead Boys meets The Electric Prunes meets The Clash meets everything ever that is cool. They rock!
3. My book better be out by now. *Surfing Armageddon*. Get it.
4. Got some cool stuff in the mail this month including the first issue of *A Beat Of Our Own* zine. It's way cool and you can write to Jared at misenplace2@hotmail.com also, Got Jared's cool 7 incher of Operation Latte Thunder/Are You Fucking Serious split. Yay!!!
4. Also on my list of cool stuff I got are a bunch of CDs. The new Sex Slaves album, although, like Andrew WK (who I like) is predictable—I love it. Kitty & The Kowalskis *Chinese Demorcray*, although it's not out yet, rocks my motherfucking world! Word up! Lukifer's *Repression* CD is amazing. Never thought I'd dig death rock..but this is very smart. Almost like "Life Rock." In fact, with the pictures of the unborn babies, indeed it is! I especially like the song "Ruined Soul." Runny has an EP out called *The Vomit EP*. Enough said. And from my pal Ida, who does P.R. for the Ramones, comes *Pan for Punks—a Steelpan Tribute to The Ramones*. You never neard "Blitzkrieg Bop" like this, I promise. Yay!!!!
5. Lastly, besides my monthly shout out to *MRR*—who *still* keep it real, I'd like to say hey to my friend, Shari. You might remember her from The Max's Kansas City days. Then again…well, punk rock!

I'm kind of in the winter doldrums here, just after the holidays. At least that crap's over with for almost another year. There is a bit of a psychological boost as the calendar turns to January. A fresh start, I suppose. I don't make resolutions, but know that days are starting to get longer and, even though there will be a lot of snow to shovel, it's only a few months until spring. Hell, spring training for the Red Sox is less than two months away. Still, it's kind of slow around here. There's a lot more lethargy. There aren't a lot of records coming in and anytime I try to mailorder something I hear about lately, it's already sold out.

Good shows have been somewhat infrequent of late, although there was a fun house show about a week ago with Michigan thrash-maniacs I Attack and XBrainiaX and two locals, the Conversions (who have quickly become one of my favorite local bands—I reviewed their demo in my last column) and Scapegoat, a Crossed Out-influenced band who have brought it up a few notches of late—their heavy punishing riffs quickly drove away the dreck that had been building up in my head and it caused me to start stomping around. I imagine that may not be such a great image in some people's eyes but I really don't give a shit. No it wasn't the show of the year but it came at a time where a release was *desperately* needed and this show provided it.

The show happened at a relatively new basement space in Brookline (right over the line from Boston) that the residents are calling the Cuntree Club—the name comes from the fact that all the residents of the house are women. Some wiseasses thought they should call the space the Maxi-Pad but that was quickly vetoed and threats were made than anyone using the latter name would be charged double for the show. Anyway, it's a small basement with kind of an odd layout. You have about three feet of space in front of the band, then the concrete floor drops down to dirt. More people stand off to the sides. If you're claustrophobic, it's probably not a good place to be. It's perfect for me. As I've said before, these are the kinds of shows I embrace in recent years. Hell, the most memorable show I saw last year was a basement show, that being Skitkids and Citizen Fish. Memorable for the killer music as well as the craziness. That's what sticks with you, instead of another night at a rock club.

I got to thinking, it's stuck with me for quite a while at this point. I was reminded of that recently when a young guy named Ronnie was talking to me at a show at Regeneration Records and he said he was curious, without trying to be rude, if I found it odd that I'd stuck around so long and had to notice all the turnover with kids in the so-called scene… I think he was trying to find out if I felt out of place at all or wondered why so many grow out of hardcore. It's a fact of life that there's a lot of turnover and it seems to happen a lot more quickly. But I told him that it was, indeed, a little dispiriting that I lose touch with people and that some of the people who used to go to shows seem to have a dismissive attitude about what's going on now. Still, let them feel that way. I don't really care. I realized that this year is the 25th anniversary of when I got into hardcore punk—when this guy Chris, who I met at a Psychedelic Furs show, of all places, in the summer of '81, told me about this sick band from DC called SOA… (Chris later became a friend and we're still in occasional contact, although I only see him when some of the old-timers come around). I thought he said DOA, a band with which I was already familiar, and I bought their *Something Better Change* and *Hardcore '81* albums that summer. A few months later, I came across the SOA 7"… holy shit, 10 songs on one record. Look how short those songs are. It was a revelation. So was hearing all the cool west coast bands that summer that had been making noise the past few years—the Germs, TSOL, Circle Jerks, Black Flag, and the Adolescents, whose "Kids Of The Black Hole" really stuck out from the pack, and I picked up their self-titled LP that summer as well. I still have the mix tapes I made of those bands, recorded from a great college radio show called "Media Blitz." I forget how old Ronnie is, but I'm sure he wasn't born when I discovered that music.

I do tend to dwell on the past sometimes—this year is also the 30th anniversary of the release of Aerosmith's *Rocks*, one of my favorite albums of all time, and also of the year I bought a used copy of Iggy & The Stooges' *Raw Power* for three dollars at a headshop which was, without my completely realizing it at the time, probably the first punk rock album I ever owned. It was the summer I dealt with getting fired from a job after a mere two days (working at a day camp) and then entering the real work force as a bagger at a grocery store: Star Market in snotty Swampscott, MA, where I grew up. That was *not* fun… having to wear a shirt and tie and that fucking apron. The local Market Basket grocery store makes its workers dress like that, and I feel as though I've stepped into a time warp. Shagging carriages really sucked, especially in the winter when they'd freeze to the parking lot.

Incidentally, I lost that job 13 months later when I put eggs in a woman's bag the wrong way and she ratted me out. That was the last straw for store management and I got canned. Denise, the personnel manager, also claimed I didn't smile enough at the customers, didn't look them in the eye often enough and say "thank you." This was the first of many jobs where I'd have problems because of my "attitude." Of course, that surly attitude fit in better when I worked in record stores, where it's part of the "charm," I suppose. Now you understand why punk appealed to me! Isn't hating one's job a universal punk theme? By the way, in a weird twist, Ellen and I are planning on refinancing our mortgage (I know—how punk) and my sister suggested we contact a loan officer named Gary who, as it turns out, was one of the frontline managers, in charge of cashiers and baggers, when I worked at Star. He was actually a cool guy, in college at the time, and easy to work with. I just hope if I go to him, he doesn't remember what a fuck-up I was at that job. Something tells me he might, but still…

Anyway, I'm rambling a bit here and I guess that's what happens when the mind wanders in the dead of winter. Lately, I'm half paying attention to the news. Truth be told, I'm kind of burnt out on all the terrible shit that's going on in the world. It's not apathy, but exhaustion. Still, I try to keep up with things. I have to admit I did enjoy hearing about the resignation of the crooked Congressman Randy "Duke" Cunningham from California after he admitted taking $2 million in bribes from defense contractors. Cunningham is a radical right-winger with a pathological hatred of gay people, for one thing. He's made disparaging references to people who, as he puts it, "support homos in the military," and once said that rectal exams are "just not natural, unless maybe you're Barney Frank," in reference to a gay Congressman from Massachusetts (who is one of the few politicians I respect, by the way). So seeing this piece of human excrement go down is a bit of poetic justice.

The latest scandal to hit the news involves Republican lobbyist Jack Abramoff who was involved in influence peddling and outright bribery, mainly to benefit his Native American casino clients, among others. He's pled guilty to both state and federal fraud charges and, according to a report on the San Francisco Chronicle's web site, "Under plea agreements negotiated in the two federal cases, the once-powerful lobbyist promised to provide evidence and testimony in a wide-ranging Justice Department corruption probe of lobbying of Congress and federal agencies." And what's starting to happen is the Bush crew and other Republicans are returning funds that were donated to them by Abramoff, in order to distance themselves from him. And there's talk of reform from Congressional quarters. Nothing like covering your ass. Let's hope some of that ass is exposed for a good legal whupping. Sorry for the trite metaphor.

Abramoff and Cunningham have something in common—once they were caught, at their press conferences of alleged contrition, both started crying. They probably cried more because they got caught and their lives were about to change radically. Not because they felt sorry, I'd imagine. Regarding Abramoff, no one likes a rat, I suppose, but if he rats out some of those right-wing scumbags, especially the Texas bug-man Tom DeLay, well, the ends justify the means. Speaking of DeLay, before Abramoff copped his plea arrangement, one of DeLay's aides and an Abramoff partner, Michael Scanlon, also pled guilty to bribery charges and he's also cooperating with federal prosecutors.

In the world of political corruption, it's not that the Democrats are that much better, but there has to be some kind of turnaround, some way to break the Republican vice-grip on all governmental entities. Maybe this is the tip of the proverbial iceberg. At the very least, it could be entertaining watching 'em squirm. How are the right-wing pundits and politicians going to spin *this* one?

Still, will people pay attention? Will the message be out there? Or will it disappear? Ron Elving had an interesting observation in a column on NPR.com. He notes that the Cunningham story didn't have a lot of "legs" even though it was "so bald a felony" and, unless there are some "big names" involved, it may not create much of an effect with your average voter. He writes, "we should not assume the public will be transfixed by tales of golf trips and restaurant meals, or a few thousand dollars given in exchange for remarks inserted in the Congressional Record." I really hope Elving is wrong, but he refers to a jaded electorate and he has a point.

Maybe I'll starting paying more attention again. In the meantime, here's some music to listen to as a soundtrack…

BOILS – *From The Bleachers* (TKO, CD)

Greg Boil is becoming a sports hooligan—he's letting his passion for his beloved Philadelphia Eagles and Flyers come to the fore, here, and he even takes it on the chin from the Dropkick Murphys' Ken Casey, whose phone message needling him about the Patriots' Super Bowl victory over the Iggles, appears here. I imagine Greg will have even more fodder after his team's collapse this year. Enough sports analysis—on to music and the Boils' latest features 25 songs of hardcore, street punk, ska and even one ill-advised country song ("Summer's Brightest Boy"). Besides the odes to his hometown teams, there are pointed observations about the Catholic church, the endless cycle of warfare and even a critique of spare-changing anarcho punks, which detracts from the real problem of homelessness because it worsens the "social stigma, to fear the homeless man." A wider-ranging sound and superior production than in the past, with the stylistic variations handled well and catchy as fuck. There's some storming stuff here. (8941 Atlanta Ave. #505, Huntington Beach, CA 92646, www.tkorecords.com)

CLUSTERFUCK / RAT BYTE – split (CD-R demo)

Latest recordings from two Connecticut bands, for a split 7" but, at this time, there's no label or release date. Hope that won't be the case for long, because this is some hot hardcore punk. Clusterfuck put out a 13-song 7" last year and their credo on that record was "humans disappoint me." That hasn't changed with such songs as "Flagfucker," "Nato Needs Shock Treatment," and "God Told Me To Buy Stocks." Shit Eating Grin" throws in a stolen Black Sabbath riff for a split second. A quavery, high-timbred singing style adds a distinct element to their driving sound. Skate-thrashers Rat Byte contribute three new songs, starting with a crossover-tinged intro before kicking it into gear. A flailing energy. (www.ratbyte.net)

COMMON ENEMY – *Let's Have Fun* (Sick of Talk, 7" EP)

COMMON ENEMY / EYES OF HATE – *Circle Pit Split* (Scene Destroyer, 7" EP)

TWATS / COMMON ENEMY – split (Overdose On Records, 7" EP)

Let's Have Some Fun is the newest EP by Philly area band Common Enemy. Speedy hardcore skate punk and sometimes the snare drum overwhelms things and the ultra-fast parts are one-dimensional, but these guys have a winning rawness, especially in the guitar department, and endearingly (?) phlegmy vocal delivery. They also sent along a couple of recent splits. The newest EP is the better of the

three, but the songs on those splits are also good and the bands they're paired with do a good job as well. New Yorkers Eyes of Hate, whose vocalist Al passed away in September of '05, dish out angry, straight-ahead hardcore punk with a hint of crossover. The Twats favor a buzzsaw punk sound with pissed vocals from the provocatively monikered Cuntess Twat. The Twats also have a full-length album on Overdose on Records. (Common Enemy website: www.commonenemy2000.com)

DEAD RADICAL – *Rottenness* (I Deal, 7" EP)

Hammering, yet technical thrash/grind, jamming ten songs on a one-sided 7". Suffering from some snare-tinniness, but it's played with tightness and pure rage, needless to say. Not a blur—there are some shit-hot guitar riffs, time shifts and throttling interplay without any sense of pretentiousness. And plenty of bile in the lyrical and vocal department. (180 Rudgate Rd., Colchester, VT 05446)

DECONDITIONED (Beginning Era, 12")

A falling-apart sound. Confrontational vocals in a high, snotty pitch and a sound that doesn't follow conventional patterns. Double-speed thrash, slower ooze, and some Flag-ish damage, particularly in the sputtering leads (I would have said that even if they didn't cover "No More"). The harder-rocking mid-tempo songs, "Play It Safe" and "Wreck Loose," are the most memorable. Even with the occasional misfire, this band has a high-energy unpredictability. I also like the pink swirl vinyl and silver cover with spraypainted logo they did for the first press. (7626 SE Clay, Portland, OR 97215, www.geocities.com/beginningerarecords)

GENTLEMAN CALLERS – *Don't Say What It Is* (Wee Rock, CD)

What "it" is is straightforward garage rock. Covering the range of pop, folkier touches and R&B-inflected raunch, and it's the latter where they really get cooking, especially for "Hey Little Girl." They do come across as gentlemen in that things don't usually get unhinged, but the songs are catchy, while Kevin Schneider fashions a serviceable Jagger-copy vocal style. Solid all the way through. (PO Box 333, Springfield, MO 65801, www.weerockrecords.com)

GROSS NATIONAL PRODUCT – Hardcore Demo (CD-R demo)

I guess the title explains it. GNP are from Brandon, Florida and their bass-player is Bob Suren, head honcho of the Sound Idea store and distro and former shouter for Failure Face and Murder-Suicide Pact. Not every song is a killer and the drums are perhaps a bit too prominent in the mix, but their scrappy hardcore punk has a winning spirit. Marley packs a lot of outrage into her high-pitched vocals (she reminds me of a younger Mish from Sado-Nation) and it's cool hearing her sing GG Allin's "You Hate Me And I Hate You." (bentzsco@hotmail.com)

STORMCROW – *Enslaved In Darkness* (No Options, LP)

Total fucking heaviness. I'm glad the LP included a note, because I was having trouble making out their logo on the cover. Thick slabs of riffage, sub-guttural vocals, and extended song lengths. The whole LP only includes five songs. Usually, the tempo is slackened, but these Bay Area crust-metal hellions occasionally pick up the pace. Lyrical matter as grim as the skullcracking sounds—disease, anguish, decay. Really cheery, but it fits the mood of the music. (PO Box 22285, Oakland, CA 94623)

TERMINAL STATE – *Your Rules* (Deranged, 12" EP)

Toronto band that reminds me quite a bit of MassHoles Out Cold, in that it has a raw punk-meets-hardcore sound that strips it down to its bare essence. Simple, snotty, catchy (in my head, at least) songs that average a bit over a minute each. Eight of 'em and it's over way too quickly. The direct route is still the best way to go. Why let expansiveness muck things up? (www.derangedyouth.com)

TWATS – *Hell In My Pants* (Overdose On Records, CD)

As mentioned above, this band from the DC area have an album out—13 songs in well under half an hour and pretty damn scorching. Hardcore/punk/rock 'n roll with a chip on the shoulder. The Twats ain't kids, they're the ones kicking and screaming their way into adulthood and not liking what they see. Bitter memories about younger years, hating jobs ("I'm A Quitter, You Should Be One Too") and cynical about politics ("Who Peed In Your Wheaties?") The latter deals with people adopting politics as a "fashion statement," as the lyrics put it. As I said earlier, I'm actually burned out on politics a bit, myself—the song's cynicism is well-founded although I'll still keep paying attention to the what those fucking politicians are up to and mouthing off about it, whether people want to hear it or not. But I kind of see their point, because there's often a lot of self-righteous baggage attached to those doing the shouting. (PO Box 525, Fleetwood, PA 19522, www.myspace.com/overdoseonrecords)

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… and an addendum to the last column's "Best of 2005" list. I should have also included Career Suicide's kickass 12" EP *Invisible Eyes*. That was a scorcher… Also, a bit of news about my radio show, Sonic Overload. It looks as though it's going to be broadcast in the Bay Area on Berkeley Liberation Radio (104.1 FM). Check their site (http://www.peacehost.net/blr) for info.

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Al Quint, PO Box 2746, Lynn, MA 01903, suburbanvoice@earthlink.net
Sonic Overload radio website:
http://sonicoverload.moocowrecords.com
The Suburban Voice site is:
www.myspace.com/suburbanvoice

A Pioneering Institution

My friend Ralowe spotted the signs announcing the Museum of the African Diaspora a year or two before it opened, right around the corner from the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA), the posh W. Hotel, the Sony Metreon entertainment complex, and the privately-policed park and galleries at Yerba Buena Gardens. In fact, the MoAD, as it calls itself (in imitation of the MOMA, one imagines), sits on the last undeveloped portion of land originally created when the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency tore down an entire neighborhood in the 1970s. This was a neighborhood of residence hotels and low-income apartment buildings housing elderly and disabled longshoremen and other tradespeople (mostly single white men), as well as Asian immigrant families—the SF Redevelopment Agency was eager to replace this "blight" with the glory of museums and hotels.

When Ralowe first noticed the signs for the new museum, he also noticed all the passersby looking at him looking at the signs. He wondered about these white people staring suspiciously, clutching their

purses and briefcases tighter as they passed what could be double trouble: a black male with an Afro, outside a construction site labeled "African Diaspora." Would this be good for business?

A week after the museum first opened, Ralowe visited to find out about their free day. Most museums in San Francisco offer one day a month when they don't charge. But not the Museum of the African Diaspora—can you imagine all those black people lining up—property values on the new high-rise condos nearby would fall dramatically! Tourists would crash their strollers into lingering SUVs! The black security guards at the MoAD eyed Ralowe suspiciously—this is a privately-funded museum, one of them said.

I went down to the MoAD with Ralowe to examine the scandal. I rarely go to museums, but I can't remember a single museum with security guards literally blocking the entrance. Two black male security guards inside the door and then a white middle-aged fag in retail—I can imagine the diversity discussion at the museum's hiring committee. Tickets to the museum are eight dollars, which doesn't seem like much of a bargain when you look down at the floor to glimpse high-end seventies bathroom tile. Looking up, the themes of the museum are elaborated on the walls, like a diorama at the Aquarium: Origins, Movement, Adaptation, Transformation. Then you walk up a stairway where speakers transmit unidentified African music while you look at photos of different kinds of black people, apparently there are 35,000 of these photos and from outside they all connect to form one face.

The security guard on the second floor is very friendly; if she wasn't wearing that uniform, I might think she was a docent. She tells Ralowe and me where to start: it's a Celebration Circle, she says. She sounds so excited. We're in a circular room with some cheesy video playing, describing all the important things in life: family, church, birth, weddings, death. Many of the people in the video are not overtly black, but we learn an inspiring message at the end: We All Come from Africa.

I expected some fetishized artifacts or overly-stylized-and-empty gallery pieces for white consumption, but the whole place is so much worse. It's like a cross between a mall, a rec center, and a preschool—grey carpet, pleasing hues of green paint on the walls, and I don't even know where to start when talking about the exhibits. You turn down a hallway to learn about What You Wear, then Music, then Food—and at the end of the hall—Slavery. It's like something Bank of America would display in the lobby and you'd say oh, that's nice—can I check my balance?

There's a room of audio histories of people who've recently escaped from slavery, which could be interesting because maybe it's not denying the continuing legacy (though it's probably just pointing away from the stars and stripes), but the fumes from the carpet are so strong that I can't stay in the room for more than a minute. I guess they forgot to fumigate. Next door to the audio histories is the Freedom Theatre, where someone's telling us about the difference between Napoleon and Toussaint L'Ouverture. One was a French emperor and the other led a slave revolt.

What's so depressing about this so-called art is that it's really nothing at all, just crappy videos that aren't interesting in terms of content, style, or format. It's like somewhere for the fourth grade field trip—thanks, but I'd rather dip my chewing gum in glue and play. Then there's an empty room that is maybe for lectures and more security guards. At least it's got a hardwood floor, so it doesn't smell so toxic, but there's nothing to look at except a few artifacts in plastic cases. I do mean a few: three items in total. Upstairs is the contemporary art section, with the pipes and insulation exposed on the ceiling, which makes no sense really, since it's a brand-new building. It doesn't look artsy or anything—it looks like crap—why are the ceilings so low? Some of the art is okay—I actually like one piece, which proclaims "The Narrative of the Life and Uncommon Sufferings of Glenn Ligon, a Colored Man Who, at a Tender Age, Discovered His Affection for the Bodies of Other Men." But then somehow we've reached the end of the museum. Are you kidding?

I go down a hallway, which turns out to be the where the offices are. An Asian woman seems very distressed that I've gotten inside; she talks to the security guard and points in the direction of the off-limits door. Every single security guard is black (there are at least six, maybe seven or eight), and then there's the white fag in retail and this upscale Asian woman in the office. Oh—and two visitors in the entire museum—that's me and Ralowe. On our way downstairs, the friendly security guard asks if we liked the museum. For some reason, she's invested in it—it's not just a job. I feel horrible. I tell her yes; I smile.

Downstairs, the white fag wants to know if we liked the museum. I smile. Ralowe wants to show me the hotel next door, actually the museum is built into the back of the hotel. It's the brand-new St. Regis, where rooms start at $529. The lobby is like a nightclub, with high high ceilings and huge beige curtains separating different lounge areas where men with swept-back hair in suits with shoulder pads and women with tasteful blond highlights and low-cut evening dresses sip cocktails on European leather sofas. This elegant lobby bar even includes an understated line of fire on a counter—don't put your drink there!

Then Ralowe and I are waiting for the bus and I'm a disaster. Ralowe was traumatized by his first visit, so I thought he'd be the one to break down — but it's me. I can't even speak I feel so awful, thinking about the friendly security guard and how she seemed so proud of this chunk of anthropological indecency chopped off one of the fanciest hotels San Francisco has ever seen. Of course Willie Brown, San Francisco's former Mayor—the ultimate white black man—sealed the deal: he's the person who famously declared that if you couldn't afford to live in San Francisco, then you should leave. He made sure to get rid of all the black people, or as many as possible, in order to make the city safer for real estate profiteering and property development. And now, Willie bestows this embarrassing trinket on San Francisco—I'm sure they spent more restoring City Hall, genuine gold leaf and all. The most valuable thing owned by the Museum of the African Diaspora is probably the bathroom fixtures.

Sometimes I cry while listening to the news, or at a movie, but almost never in public. But waiting for the bus I can't stop thinking about that security guard asking me if I liked the museum and I just start crying about all the horrible inequality in the world and the visible legacy of white supremacy in everyday life. I'm sitting next to some random guy at the bus stop and I'm staring across the street at the entrance to Neiman Marcus. I'm thinking: I can't live in this world I'm too fragile.

Ralowe asks if I'm okay. No, I'm not okay—and then I'm really sobbing, thinking what is it about this museum in particular? I went to the SFMOMA about a year ago, and saw some sculpture from the sixties by Louise Bourgeois, a white French artist whose work I've liked in the past. But this sculpture was literally an African totem, and I looked at it and thought: I am actively participating in colonialism. Which is part of how I'm feeling today. I'm

also thinking about the audacity of Willie Brown for brokering this elementary school art exhibit and calling it a pioneering institution, the first of its kind in the world.

But what really breaks my heart is that security guard who seemed invested in our enjoyment of something so insubstantial, so embarrassing, so inconsequential, so awful. I sensed that she felt some sort of pride in it and I wanted to allow her that space and that's what makes me so sad, the hopelessness of it all. That I was too stunned to find a way not to say yes, I enjoyed it .

I'm just staring straight ahead and sobbing, Ralowe is silent next to me and I'm aware of the irony that I'm the one who's breaking down. We're waiting for the bus, along with at least 15 or 20 holiday shoppers. I don't want the bus to arrive because I'm worried it'll be that awful driver who is always so militaristic about making sure that everyone pays the full fare. Especially every black person, poor person, faggot, or freak. The driver's black too, so he has to prove something. And I won't be able to handle him now, not after the Museum of the African Diaspora. I say to Ralowe: they need to put that bus driver in the Museum of the African Diaspora, they can just move his whole bus into that lecture room next to the artifacts and he can sit there and make everyone pay.

Finally the bus comes. I'm not really waiting for it or anything, but at least it's not the driver I was dreading. The bus is packed; I guess 9 pm is like rush hour now, since the service cuts. Ralowe gets on with me—before, he was going to go home. I sit in the back row, next to some big white guy in a business suit playing with his iPod. For some reason, Ralowe finds it hard to ask the guy to move over, his voice is almost a whisper. I can't help but see this man as a symbol of white supremacy, and Ralowe's difficulty a consequence. The guy seems confused, then moves over.

At home, I'm wondering if I've ever been to a museum like that before, something so shabby. I mean, I went to the Schwules Museum in Berlin—I think it was the first gay museum—and it was tiny and a bit rundown, but they had a big library and it felt like a community institution that people were working hard to create, it actually felt inspiring.

The MoAD is shabby in the overfunded way. I mean, they have like 25 different committees listed in the back of the brochure: International Honorary Committee, Board Of Directors, Steering Committee, Supporters, Cornerstone Committee, Content Committee, Curatorial Advisory Committee, Education Policy Committee, Technology Advisory Council Membership, Media Producers, Public Relations, Design Team. Not to mention a staff of eleven, which includes the retail fag but none of the eight security guards for each shift. I mean, what do they need eight security guards for—is somebody going to steal a video projection screen? I think one security guard could take care of the art upstairs. But then maybe some unruly black people would try to get in for free!

Mattilda, aka Matt Bernstein Sycamore is the editor, most recently, of *That's Revolting! Queer Strategies for Resisting Assimilation* (Soft Skull 2004) and the author of *Pulling Taffy* (Suspect Thoughts 2003). She also selected and introduced the just-released *Best Gay Erotica 2006*. Mattilda lives for feedback, so send her love letters and delicious threats via the newly updated www.mattbernsteinsycamore.com, which includes past *MRR* columns. Or write to PO Box 640047, San Francisco, CA 94164-0047.

Five-dollar shows. It seems like we have more than outgrown them. I don't want to pay more for shows, but five dollars doesn't get you anywhere else these days besides a punk show. And considering that most punk shows I go to have bands from other states, sometimes even other countries, the five-dollar show seems kind of funny. Think on it. Twenty years ago a standard was set for five-dollar shows. Has anything else stayed the same price for that long? How about three-dollar 7"s? Well you find a lot of four-dollar and five-dollar 7" records these days. And LPs can easily be anywhere between eight to twelve dollars. Not too often that you find a six-dollar record anymore, though that was the norm before CDs. But when CDs came out, suddenly ten dollars for a CD was the standard, and vinyl started to match that price. Perhaps you see a CD for ten dollars and vinyl for eight, even though it should probably be the other way around, as CDs are cheaper to make, and vinyl these days is almost more of a novelty.

What about T-shirts? We were making five-dollar T-shirts in the early 90s. Now ten dollars is normal. Perhaps even twelve to fifteen if you start looking at package tours and shit. If you look at super big metal or rock shows, suddenly T-shirts are fifteen to twenty-five, which is absurd in my opinion. Of course those shows are also fifteen to twenty dollars, so we're talking about a lot of money, and not punk rock. And you won't find any vinyl from the bands at those shows (definitely not 7"s). If prices go up, personally I'd rather see T-shirt prices higher, even merchandise as a whole, while door prices are low. Keep it "for the people" you know, and not about commodities, and "stuff."

But really, haven't we all outgrown the five-dollar show? And yet, do I want to pay more than five-dollars? No. When I see a ten-dollar door price for a decent show that's fully worthy of my ten dollars, I cringe. I give a second thought to it, even. Even the seven-dollar show, when I just want to pop in a see one band and say hello to someone, makes me second-guess sometimes. It's just one of those strange things we've gotten stuck in.

And zines—one dollar for a zine used to be a standard. And many people still want to pay no more than a dollar for a zine, when the reality is that you can't print anything worthwhile for that price. Actually, I think the reality is that no one really buys zines, period. The same people will throw down five dollars for a magazine at a newsstand, but then lament a two-dollar or three-dollar self-published zine. It's funny, 'cause I started doing a book and zine distro at shows, largely in part because I wanted to make hard-to-find stuff more available, and also more affordable. And yet I'm convinced these days that a lot of people would rather go to the chain bookstore (where surprisingly, many of the same books are now available) and plop down the full price, or order something on line and pay the priority mail shipping, than buy it from a comrade at a discounted price. And besides the fact that people no longer have cash in their pockets, and if they order it at home on the computer and use Paypal or a credit card or something, it seems like they're not actually spending real "cash." Other than that, I can't see any other real explanation.

Perhaps that is really at the heart of it. Cash. A friend of mine said that I needed to get Paypal to accept money for ads for my zine, 'cause the kids spend money on

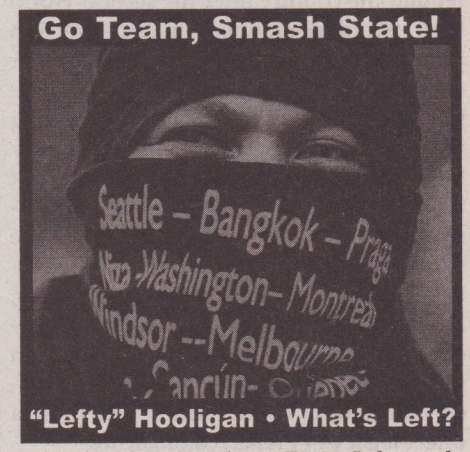
Paypal like it's not real money. And perhaps for that same reason, I've got an aversion to transferring funds over the computer. I want cash in hand, or check in hand, not some electronic transfer that I never actually see, that seems like it could be easily stolen, or lost, or crashed in cyberspace. Yet, we are moving towards a cashless society. You can use your credit card now to buy your fast food. Pretty soon we won't need cash for anything, other than our five-dollar punk shows. Believe me, I'm not talking shit on it. I love our five-dollar punk shows, and I hate commerce on-line and by plastic. I just think it's all quite ironic and strange.

Now what really got me started on my show "rampage" was thinking about all-ages shows. I love all-ages shows. I think it's important for everyone and anyone to be able to come to a show, and I don't think that shows should be limited by age. But, what I personally hate about all-ages shows is that they tend to be early and I hate early shows for a few reasons. First of all, I'm a night person, so to get up and go straight to a show doesn't usually feel right, even though I did it for practically a decade every Saturday at ABC No RIO. I especially hate the early shows in the summer, when daylight lingers into the evening—going into a dark club while the sun shines just doesn't feel right. I don't go to movies during the day either, for much the same reason. I don't ever get or see enough of the sun, so to hole up against it in the dark feels wrong. In the winter, when it's already dark by the time any all-ages show (even a matinee it seems—dark at 3 p.m.) it's often more a matter of the day just getting started. A 5 p.m. show on a weeknight? Who is really ready to go rock at that point? Just got out of class, or just got off work, and it's time to go off to a show? Or in my case, I'm heading to work at that point. In my town, there is a curfew, so all-ages shows have to be over by 11 p.m. And often that translates to 10 p.m., so that a club or bar can still have a late show. Personally, I'm all about the late shows, mostly 'cause it suits my schedule. But I understand that my schedule is by far not the norm. It's just a strange thing that I find myself pondering.

The all-ages show has been just as important to the punk community as the five-dollar donation to get in. The older folks get the less they tend to care about it, but it is still one of those tenants of our mission statement, so to speak. Access is important. It's much of what punk is about, equality, equal access, equal treatment, no age restrictions, no celebrity worship, no boundaries. These days it's not that hard to set up a show. There are a plethora of bars and clubs that will set up a punk show. An all-ages punk show is harder to do usually in some of those same bars and clubs. Renting a hall and using a non-bar or club spot can be much harder, and it also requires a lot more work on the part of those setting up the show. People like to drink at shows and too many punks have become selfish and without respect for the people who set up the shows. They sneak alcohol into spaces where it is prohibited, they graffiti the bathrooms and leave trash behind as they "use" the space they move through. It's too bad, as many people stop doing shows, and many spaces stop holding shows for these same reasons. It's also frustrating that alcohol becomes so much a part of a show that people will miss the show they go to because they are in the bar down the street, or become so drunk they pass out and miss the bands, or just refuse to not drink at a show, meaning they either sneak their beer in, or just don't show up at all.

So, gee, having a show in a bar, where the prohibition of alcohol isn't an issue and no one's ass is on the line to set up, clean up etc. the rented space, is a non-issue. But then there is the age thing. Bars tend to not let anyone under 18 in. Most bars don't want to do all-ages shows cause it's a pain the ass. They don't make any money, they have to come into work early, or the laws of the town have strict rules about age and alcohol and what can fly. There are many angles. We're lucky in my town that we have a couple decent places that have all-ages shows, and you can drink if you are of age, and co-mingle with those who can't. It just has to happen early. And so I shouldn't complain really, compared to many places, we have our cake and can eat it at the same time. But I miss out on so many of these early all-ages punk shows cause I can't get there at 5 p.m. to rock my punk, and that just plain sucks. But what really sucks right now is that Imperial Leather are playing a rad all-ages early show here in RVA that I will be missing because I can't get out of work in time, and wah, wah, wah.

Well, I love the punks, old and young. I love that we have all-ages shows, and that not everyone has to base a punk show around getting drunk. I love that we still have cheap DIY punk shows and that we can all come together for these events whether at 5 p.m. or 10 p.m., whether 16 or 36. Whether there is a stage or a corner of the room, a P.A. or an amp running vocals. One way or another we work it out, we find the means and we come together for our shows. Keep on doing it, and respect those who organize the shows and make them happen and the bands that come from afar to play in your towns. A lot of work goes into making it all happen and it can so easily be taken for granted. Remember that there shouldn't be boundaries and barriers and that you can break them down by pitching in and helping out, respecting the show space, the people around you, and supporting the local events that happen in your community. An all-ages five-dollar show in this day and age is something to treasure.



"Lefty" Hooligan • What's Left?

History has weight in Paris. It has substance. It is tangible. When you walk around Paris there is the sense that you're in a place that's been settled and civilized for some two thousand two hundred years. Thanks to Baron Haussmann a good deal of the city's architecture dates from the mid nineteenth century, right around the time the Gold Rush gave San Francisco its distinctive Victorian and Edwardian architecture. I live in San Francisco, but there's not nearly the burden of history to be felt walking around its streets.

The feeling of historical significance in Paris doesn't come just from being able to visit medieval edifices like Sainte-Chapelle and Notre Dame, but also from experiencing cultural attitudes that are even older. That self-contained, self-absorbed, navel-of-the-universe mindset that Parisians have about their city is rooted all the way back to when Paris was a thriving Celtic town centered in two fortified islands in the Seine River, getting its big boost when Paris was the capital of the duchy of Francia, the crown lands of the Capetian kings and the nucleus of the nascent French nation after the Crusades. The French reputation for being a closed, inwardly focused, haughty, even xenophobic society can be found in this historical Parisian atti-

tude writ large.

Knowing how to assess history means being able to make fairly accurate assessments of the future based upon the past. Take the recent rioting by Arab and North African youth in the suburbs outside Paris and across France that I missed by a week and a half on my last vacation. American conservatives blamed it on multiculturalism, whereas liberals in this country criticized the lack of affirmative action in French society. Neither explanation has much to do with why the riots occurred, and why France can expect such problems to continue in the future. Encouraged to settle in France from the 1950s to help rebuild the country after the second World War, the dark-skinned, mainly Muslim immigrants came from France's former colonies. They were never accepted or integrated into French society despite residing for generations in the country, and they have staged periodic rebellions against their conditions, lodged as they are in massive, squalid public housing blocks in the suburbs, with few employment opportunities, subject to discrimination and racism, harassed by the police, regulated by government bureaucracies and dependent on state welfare programs. These unassimilated immigrant communities are thus a direct legacy of French colonialism,

The official response to the recent immigrant problems has been calls for increased state intervention, a typical French solution to social problems that accounts for a massive welfare state whose bureaucracy is one of the largest employers in France. A product of French liberalism and social democracy, the state in France could easily implement affirmative action programs without resolving the problem of immigrants in the country. That's because the problem is located in the historical solidity of French society; in a proud, hermetic national culture that is the very opposite of multiculturalism. White, Christian Anglo-Saxon foreigners who have lived in France most of their lives, speak French perfectly and understand the nuances of French culture flawlessly are still considered outsiders by the French. The non-native spouse of a French person, who has French children and French in-laws, is still not accepted as French. Can you imagine what its like being a non-white Muslim Arab or North African who hasn't shed the last trappings of his or her immigrant culture? The truth is, the French aren't much interested in accepting or assimilating foreigners into their society. As long as that is the case, France will continue to have problems with riots and rebellions by the immigrant communities in the country.

In turn, the French example is not illustrative of the problems with Muslim immigration and multiculturalism in Europe as a whole. Perhaps I'll delve into this convoluted subject at greater length in some future column, but the short answer as to why this is so is because history is weighted differently around the continent. And, unlike the self-congratulatory historical amnesia of the United States, history is taken seriously in Europe and the rest of the world. Where history seems to bear down the heaviest in my limited experience is in Israel/Palestine. I spent six months in the region in the mid-1970s and marveled at how every inch of the land seemed encrusted with history; Canaanite and Hebrew archeological sites, Hellenistic and Roman ruins, Crusader castles, the relics of Ottoman and British rule.. The bloody conflicts of the region are so deeply rooted in its tangled past that it's easy to despair of any solution ever being found.

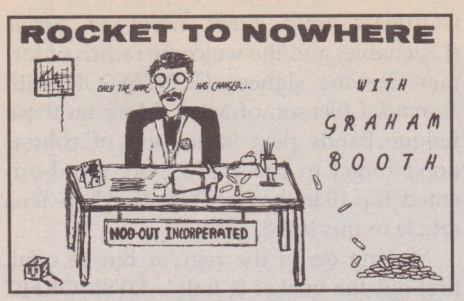
The UK *Sunday Times* carried a story on December 11, 2005, that Israel's armed forces had been put on alert, "to be ready by the end of March for possible strikes on secret uranium enrichment sites in Iran." It doesn't require much of an understanding of history to know what will happen if Israel launches preemptive strikes against Iran's growing nuclear capabilities. It is rumored that much of Iran's clandestine uranium enrichment operation is hidden in heavily populated civilian areas, so collateral damage would be extremely high. The United States would at least have to give Israel permission to use Iraqi air space, if not Iraqi territory, to stage the strikes, so America would be implicated even if US forces are not involved. [The 12-31-05 issue of *Der Spiegel* contends that the US is actively planning for such a strike, and the *Jerusalem Post* of the same date adds that NATO is also considering a military attack on Iran.] The Israeli strikes, along with the slaughter of Iranian civilians and an American stamp of approval, would outrage the entire Muslim world. The Shi'ites in southern Iraq, already armed to the teeth by Iran, would rise up in solidarity with their Iranian brethren against American and British coalition forces to drive them out of the south. The US military would continue to find the Sunni areas of Iraq untenable, which would leave only the Kurdish north as a friendly base for US operations. There would be no thought of troop reductions under such circumstances. Turkey, fearing that this arrangement heralds the rise of an independent Kurdish state out of the shambles of Iraq, would invade the Kurdish north…

I could go on, but there's a fine line between reasonable prediction based on history, and science fiction. I use history as a tool in writing my science fiction, not only to provide plausible near futures by extrapolating from current trends but also to give my more speculative futures consistent back-stories. I've been asked how I managed to "predict" the emergence of a revolutionary movement in southern Mexico called the Zapatistas in my first novel, *End Time*, published in January of 1994. The short and sweet answer is, I study history.

I'm currently going through the notes from my copy editor for the last major rewrite on my second novel. I expect the effort to take another year. The whole idea of having the second book professionally edited was to make it as commercially viable as possible while still retaining the political content. After the rewrite, the finished manuscript gets sent off to agents, editors and small publishers in the hopes of landing a standard publishing contract. I can always self-publish the novel like I did my first one, as a last resort if the conventional channels don't get me anywhere. I'll put together my own publishing company in that case, instead of going through AK Press. I always wanted to start my own publishing company.

This is starting to sound an awful lot like I'm making a list of New Year's resolutions, not least because I'm writing this at the turn of the year. For the reader, this is my March column. Who knows, by the end of that month, a new and much more dangerous crisis in the Middle East might be in the offing. Needless to say, France had a hand in making that region of the world as fucked up as it is. The names Sykes-Pico and Lebanon are freighted with the history of French colonialism. Still and all, I much prefer the cynical historical sensibilities of Parisian life to the abysmal naiveté of life almost anywhere in the United States. The French had their empire and lost it. Americans don't even grasp that they have an empire to lose.

PERSONAL PROPAGANDA… To find out my real name purchase my book, *End Time*, from AK Press (POB 40682, SF, CA 94140-0682) for $10. The book is called *Fim* in Portuguese and can be ordered from Conrad Editora (R. Maracaí, 185, Aclimação, 01534-030, São Paulo-SP, Brasil) for R$ 24,90. I can be contacted via email at hooligentsia@mac.com.



So you want to be a record collector? What the hell are you thinking? This is your wake up call. For a real eye opener, try going to an old-fashioned Record Show (yes, they still exist). Don't believe me? Check out www.recordshowsofamerica.com. Next time you're spending some quality time scouring the dregs (everybody knows all the good stuff ends up on eBay nowadays), take a moment to observe the cast of winners around you. Think of yourself as Scrooge accompanying the Ghost of Christmas future: this could be *your* future.

Best get there early, like at least 25 minutes before the doors open—this is for ambience people! You should already see a line-up taking shape. No doubt several middle-aged men will be there…some standing in small groups, and even more who came alone. Out of twenty or so, there is probably at least one guy with most of his hair left, who might actually pass for normal if taken out of context. You can be sure that he will be accompanied by at least one friend, and that friend will be noticeably less, er, "presentable." This friend is his safety net, acting as a buffer between his normalcy and the teeming mental patients / low-lifes standing a few steps back in the line.

As you work your way down the food chain, you may come across the winsome, yet socially inept heavyset loner type, jealous of an actual conversation. In a sad cry for help, he will blurt out some random reference about the Japanese PINK FLOYD DVD he purchased at the last record show. He hopes someone will take the bait, and reciprocate into an apparent full-blown conversation. A few moments of awkward silence will pass, and just as you're about to wipe your brow in relief, an even more awkward, "um, yeah" will emanate from the inconspicuous, rotund man who you've only just noticed has been standing behind you in line for the last ten minutes.

Remember, it is very early for a Sunday morning, especially for the losers standing next to you who, up all night on Internet porn, haven't slept since they woke up at 4:00 PM on Saturday. Even you can barely hold yourself up, and you resort to shifting your weight back and forth across your legs. If you're really cut out for this line of work, you will have an uncomfortable yearn of anticipation in your gut, keeping you twitching in a zombie-like state worse than a triple espresso. The rotgut will gradually increase over those early minutes until finally the line starts its slow progression towards the doors.

As a few collectors begin to pass beyond the glowing gates, you spot the first other person under the age of 30 to appear in the hotel lobby. He joins the back of the line and your stomach drops…Fuck! Competition! Your uncomfortable state worsens, and you press forward in the line, veering frighteningly close to the billowing sociopath standing in front of you. A marginally sincere "excuse me" is barely enough to divert the wrath of this sweaty RONNY JAMES DIO fanatic, but the line creeps forward, and he forgets you just as quickly.

Finally you make it to the admission table. You can all but see the potential ahead when the mannish 20-something female informs you that it's $4 to get in. She balks at your $20 dollar bill, and as several people behind you in line quickly pass through the other cashier, she slowly counts out your change. Then, as you shove your fist in her face to get it stamped, she tells you that you need to fill out your address on their mailing list before she can stamp your hand. "Do it neatly, or you'll have to fill out another one." How charming. You sense the competition lurking behind and jot down your address in your best scribble. Finally, your hand is stamped, and at long last you step inside the record show.

As you survey the room, you're shocked and dismayed. That's it? There are only maybe twelve dealers, and at least one is selling bootleg CDs, and this guy is hawking laminated backstage passes—do people even buy those things? I paid $4 for this? I bet only one of these guys even knows what punk ro…uhhh, wait a sec, is that my competition walking through the door? No time to think, just pick a table dammit!

You pick the far aisle and slowly make your way past the dealers. This isn't looking good. You read the labels on the crates…*ROCK, ROCK, ROCK, SOUL, JAZZ, FOLK, EASY, JAZZ*…next guy…everything two-for-$5…what kind of…no time…*JAZZ, JAZZ, SOUL, GOSPEL, RELIGIOUS* …no…next gu…*NEW WAVE*, uhhh, fuck, one crate, *stop*! You start flipping…ADAM ANT, ALTERED IMAGES, ASSOCIATES… uhhh…you look up across the room and spot your competition hunched over flipping, and lost in deep concentration in the booth right by the door…fuck…I wonder what he's…BABY GRAND…new wave? …what did he just pull out…fuck!…I hate this table…next guy has some 45s…PICTURE SLEEVES…BOBBY DARIN, BOBBY RYDELL…BOBBY SOXX! And the BLUE JEANS…fuck this 50s shit…CHUBBY CHECKER…what did that asshole get?…flip three-four at a time…ELVIS, ELVIS, uhh, what's this…POLICE …fuck…SEX PISTOLS…$15…*die*!…fuck, he just pulled out something else!…YOKO ONO…next table!

The mania continues. You stop and look at some old guy's 80s ROCK box. Eager to engage you in a conversation, he asks, "What kind of stuff are you looking for?" "Punk, uhh, new wave, from the late 70s and 80s." "Oh yeah, I used to have a lot of that stuff, but you won't find any of it in here. I still have a few things left, but I'll have to bring it to the next show." Thanks. Another guy actually has a small section of LPs marked PUNK in one crate. There's an IRON MAIDEN LP, about six different sealed MISFITS LP reissues and some late 80's punk/alternative/indie compilations. You too could have all of this for a measly $4 admission!

Finally you get within eyeshot of the competition's short stack. Right on top you spot an album by thee legendary HEATWAVE! Yay, it's all SOUL/DISCO crapola—thank you DJs! You breathe easy and start to take your time digging deeper into the less promising looking boxes…jeez, there are *a lot* of them! With each passing minute, your standards decrease, and you briefly consider purchasing items outside of your usual interest range…hey, this is from '87 and looks kinda "punk," uhher maybe "grunge." Who the fuck is this band…I wonder if this is worth any money?…erhh, grunge worth money? But…damn, I need one of those wireless Internet phones…

You snap out of record mode as you're reminded of the growing stacks of awful records amassed on your living room floor: sure they're too bad to file with the keepers, but you actually spent decent money on this shit…you can't put them in the trash where they really belong. But it's so hard to walk around the room with all that shit everywhere…aaggh…OK, calm down.

You look up from the bins and take another survey of the room. Who are these fucking losers? Is this a Star Trek Convention or what? What is up with all

these massive people bent over boxes of frayed and shredded thrift store records? I was at the last record show, and I can recognize at least half the records in this room, and no one even bothered to lower the prices on most of them. What do these people think they're gonna find? I mean, I know that record is $1 and all, but that thing is so waterlogged, it looks like it sunk with the Titanic—are you really going to bring that into your house? Yikes, imagine what *that* guy's record collection looks like! Imagine what his *house* looks like! Is this really what I'm in for?

You continue looking around, and start to notice the dealers. Man, where did all these old men come from? Is this what I'm going to be doing when I'm in my 60s? Taking a day off of the nursing home to peddle a bunch of junk records that have been sitting unsold in a storage locker for 30 years? Maybe if enough time passes I can finally squeeze a whole $2 out of some of them.

Look, there's a twelve-year old skater kid working that table. Cool, I wish I was into collecting records at twel…er, wait! There's the kid's dad…"Keep an eye on the table. I need to go talk to some people."…shrug…That kid must fucking hate records, hate music, and despise his fucking father for dragging him to a Ramada Inn on a Sunday afternoon.

The sickest part is that a true record collector's mind is completely oblivious to how annoying they are to the rest of the world. That kid's dad probably thinks he has a great relationship with his son, and that he's getting great sales experience to boot! Whatever works for him I gue…ugghh…what the fuck is that smell…?!

"Hey Man…You got anything by Leslie West?"…*[wha?]*…"Awww"…*[walks to the next table]*…"Hey Man…You got any Leslie West?"…"Do I have any Dottie West?"…"Nawww, You know! MOUNTAIN!"… *[shrug]*… "Awww."… *[walks to the next table]* "Hey Man…You got any…"

Like I said, where do these people come from? I say it's about time for you to leave. With a $16 armful of crap records you would've passed up under any other circumstances, you better stop while you're ahead. What happened to that fateful score—the money shot? Well, this is 2006: you don't get one. Sorry! Maybe in a month, you'll have built your tolerance for sociopaths back up. And by then, after you've had zero luck at the local stores, eBay has you deeply in debt, and you're lookin' for a cheap record fix… you'll be coming back for more. And remember, that guy from the 6th table said he was going to bring you his box of "punk" records at the next show. Oh joy!

New Year's? Happy Stinkin' New Year's (to the tune of "Gold Hat" from *Treasure of the Sierra Madre*). Since it's year-end top-ten time round these parts—you can read my grind/standard issue Top 10 elsewhere in these pages—I thought I'd amend that list with an additional Top 15 (an extra five since it was such an unusually strong year) of records too metal for inclusion in the regular *MRR* reviews section. Without further ado:

Zombie Picnic's Top 15 Metal Releases of 2005:

1. CRYPTOPSY – *Once Was Not* (Century Media)
2. THE DYING LIGHT – *The Killing Plan* (Willowtip)
3. RUMPELSTILTSKIN GRINDER – *Buried in the Front Yard* (Relapse)
4. CATHETER – *Dimension 303* (Self-madegod)
5. SLOUGH FEG – *Atavism* (Cruz del Sur)
6. EMBALMING THEATRE – *Exquisite Cadaveric Hormon Cocktails* (Power it Up)
7. PELICAN – *The Fire in Our Throats Will Beckon the Thaw* (Hydrahead)
8. SOILENT GREEN – *Confrontation* (Relapse)
9. 1349 – *Hellfire* (Candlelight)
10. ROTTEN SOUND – *Exit* (Willowtip)
11. JESU - *Heartache* (Dry Run) & *s/t* (Hydrahead)
12. HIGH ON FIRE – *Blessed Black Wings* (Relapse)
13. GIRTH – *Living in Truth* (Hector Stentor)
14. NEURAXIS – *Trilateral Progression* (Willowtip)
15. POPULATION REDUCTION – *Each Birth a New Disaster* (demo)

I won't go into too much detail on any of these now as space is limited and I've already said plenty about most of 'em. A couple other releases worth mentioning, that probably would've made the list had I not gotten them in the last days of the year and had more time to listen to them, are GOJIRA's epic *From Mars to Sirius* (Listenable) and the welcome return of former Earache signees CONFESSOR with *Unraveled* (Season of Mist). More on these unique bands next issue, and of course, don't forget to check my more grind-oriented Top 10 in the staff Year-End Top-Tens article in this issue.

Moving on to the regular bin of offal, first out the bucket is Italy's DYSMORFIC and their 35-song discography CD, *Suffer and Die* (Extremist, www.extremistrecords.com). The full-length eponymous session starts things off, demonstrating far more chaotic and musically adventurous song structures than that of earlier material included further along on the disc. The latest stuff is of the change-tempos-every-five-seconds with blasts and noodly-guitar-runs-all-over-the-place style perpetrated by the likes of AVULSION and FUCK THE FACTS. As comparison, you get the *Born to Be Fucked* 7" and the ULCERRHOEA split 7", the former of which sports an amazingly fucked up grindcore rendition of "Blitzkrieg Bop" which is worth the price of admission alone. These EPs are in the same chaotic vein but obviously noisier and sloppier which can be explained as transition-stage work when compared to the earliest material, the songs from their split with DROGHEDA when they were a more straight-forward gurgling death/grind outfit, though still pretty ripping in their own right. Watch out for these guys in the future—word is they may be heading over Stateside sometime in '06 to spread the disease—don't miss 'em when they do.

Next up is a new band outta Long Island, New York, entitled BIOLICH (how do they settle on names like this…) and their debut, *The Space Between Home and Today* (Paragon, www.paragonrecords.net). The most obvious comparison in terms of style and musical approach is CRYTOPSY, particularly in the drumming. This is another band where the drumming is center stage, with all kinds of intricate fills and precision blasting. But this ends up underscoring the shortcoming of the band as well, that the guitars aren't pulling their weight, being relatively tame and inconsequential comparatively. The band's method of mixing things up with some odd, almost emo-ish melodic interludes is somewhat questionable as well, as is the seven-minute IDM (that's "intelligent dance music," one of my most hated musical terms ever) track, "Ikon Sumo." Still, when not off on some quasi-fitting tangent, there's some mighty impressive stuff here

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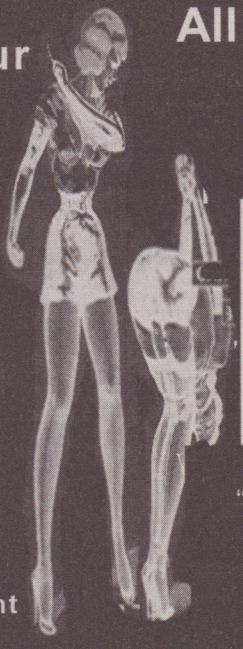

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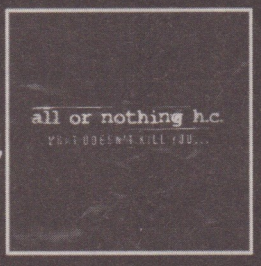

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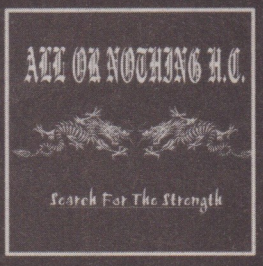

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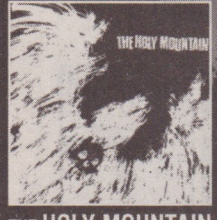

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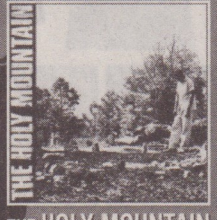

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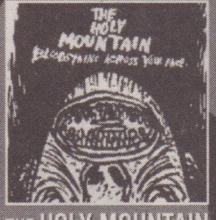

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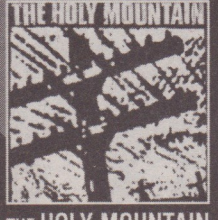

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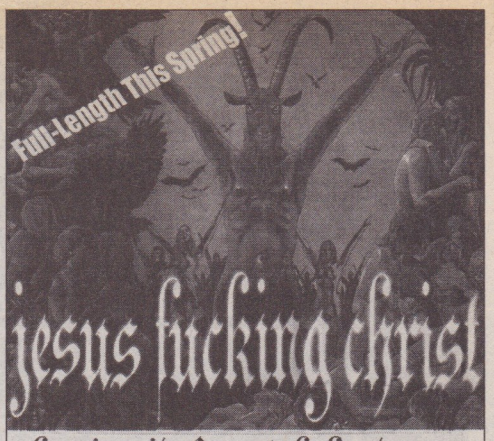

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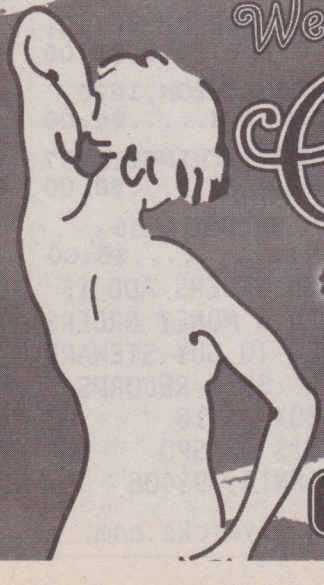


Over 65,000 Items Over 15,000 Bands

for a first outing. Assuming the band steadies its aim and refines its direction a bit, they could be a serious death/grind contender in time.

Anyone who reads this column attentively knows I'm not much of a black metal fan, so it should be indicative of just how much ass Norway's 1349 kicks that I put it in my year-end Top Ten. *Hellfire* (Candlelight, www.candlelightrecords.co.uk) is the first true Nordic black metal album I've really dug since EMPEROR's *Anthems to the Welkin at Dusk*. Actually, maybe the last black metal I bought was a SATYRICON record, which makes sense since part of what makes 1349 so great is the unbelievable drumming of Frost, also of SATYRICON. I know it must get old hearing me say this, but he's really got some of the fastest blasting ever put to tape here. The guitarists are right up there with him though, having a nice balance of a super grim blackened guitar sound with some fairly technical riffing and catchy riffs. The vocals are more unique than normal also, sounding a bit more natural and comprehensible (though still plenty mean and forlorn) rather than the standard black metal shriek. Really an unusually quality black metal record—maybe I'll be converted to the treble side of metal after all.

Of a totally different style, I may also be finally coming around to another band I thought for sure I didn't like—Oakland, California's THE MASS. It was pretty easy to be turned off by their overly skronky jazz-metal debut *City of Dis*, which featured very prominent use of everyone's least favorite metal instrument, the saxophone. Their new full-length, *Perfect Picture of Wisdom and Boldness* (Crucial Blast, www.crucialblast.net) released just a year later, wisely tones down the sax big time, relegating it to the background and utilizing its, um, charms, sparingly enough that it's not too much of an annoyance. Instead they've been focusing on some seriously nerdily intricate math-rock arrangements with songs often reaching the nine-minute mark, filled with a slew of well-put-together changes, stop-on-a-dime start/start riffing and plenty of odd atmospherics in between. This is like a cross between HELMET, NOMEANSNO, MELVINS, and MR. BUNGLE, without really sounding anything like any of these. No one really puts out straight-up "rock" records that are any good anymore but this is the exception to the rule, with songs that take their time developing and heading to all sorts of strange corners and really carving a unique and worthwhile niche.

Speaking of rock, the stoner rock scene's been fertile lately, though not all of its offspring are as desirable as others. In the ugly baby category, Southern Lord presents the new album *Vampire Circus* from Maryland's EARTHRIDE. Sharing some kinship with Wino's SPIRIT CARAVAN (the singer of ER also sang and played bass in SC), these guys completely unsurprisingly traffic in the exact same style of PENTAGRAM/SAINT VITUS doom as that of THE OBSESSED and the aforementioned SPIRIT CARAVAN. I gotta say, this style wearies awful quick on me—at times the insultingly simple songs are just a step away from bad bar band fare, saved only by the sub-bass tuning of the guitars. Songs like "Dirtnap" have a pretty mean churn, but most of this isn't too moving and some is borderline cheese rock.

Maybe no prettier to look at, but definitely better on the ears, is the new four-song EP *Emerald Vulture* (Dark Reign, www.thisdarkreign.com/), supposedly the first of a coming trilogy from North Carolina to New Orleans transplants SOURVEIN. Definitely the sort of stoner sludge I prefer, this is grimy detuned feedback-ridden sludge with a massive groove ala EYEHATEGOD and BUZZOV*EN, whom the singer supposedly used to play with. Serious head-banging material here; there's nothing terribly original about 'em but they definitely distinguish themselves on the strength of their riffs alone—catchy enough to have me looking forward to the next couple sessions for sure.

It's been ages since I reviewed any vinyl in this column, but thankfully a couple noteworthy 7"s have shown up in the mail recently. First up, Maarten from Holland's INTUMESCENCE sent me their split EP with the mighty EMBALMING THEATRE from Switzerland. I've raved plenty about this great Swiss outfit in these pages, and their four songs on this split (including a G-ANX cover) aren't doing anything to change my mind that they're one of the best and somehow most unique gore-grind bands going these days. A lot of that has to do with their singer, who's far more distinctive than most, plus the songs just have a great macabre feel to them. INTUMESCENCE, on the flip side, are pushing the envelope in terms of ridiculously pitch-shifted gurgling CARCASS vocals; their whole side is so insanely detuned and subharmonic, I thought I was playing the record at the wrong speed. The split is sold out from the label (Murder the World, www.murdertheworld.net), so give Maarten a shout if you need one (marten.punk@excite.com).

Maarten also included the MATKA TERESA/UNHOLY GRAVE split 7" he released on his own label, Brigade of Natural Genocide. Unfortunately I wasn't quite as enamored of this piece of wax as the other. MATKA TERESA, a Polish/Dutch group based outta Amsterdam and singing in both languages, plus English, is not-so-distinctive power violence/grind with two singers, high and low, the former of which seems to exclaim only "Waaa, waaa, waaa" like a soiled-diapered infant. UNHOLY GRAVE's as good as always—four decent tracks, but not so much as to make this a release I'd go out of your way to find.

One that I would recommend going out of your way for—in fact you're gonna have to—is the EP from Germany's BOLZ'N. I reviewed this in the regular MRR reviews section earlier last year and it took me a while before I remembered I wanted to track this beast down. Think of the uglier, grindier side of German metalcore, like the first SYSTRAL and MORSER releases mixed with the noise interludes and tech angle of CREATION IS CRUCIFIXION, and you can approximate an idea of their sound. Definitely worth checking out this unknown band, and this is where the effort comes in: I found only one distributor in the U.S. selling it, Moo Cow Records (moocowrecords.com), so try them or the label (Ulan Bator Records, ulanbator2502@yahoo.de)—you'll be glad you did.

Another 7" I reviewed previously in *MRR* that I was very happy to see show up at my door is the "killer" *Christ Killer* EP from Portland's ORDER OF THE VULTURE (New Audio Terror, audioterrorist13@yahoo.com). In case you missed the review the first time, O.O.T.V. are a perfect mix of hardcore and black metal with a relentless pace, scathing vocals decrying all things Christian and virtuous, and some seriously catchy CELTIC FROST worship on the track "Incantation." The vocals really put this one over the top and the packaging's great too, with poster, stickers, and multi-scriptured insert.

Apparently thinking they hadn't severed ties enough with the holy trinity, two members of VULTURE went on to form an even more Satanic band, this time dropping the hardcore influence for a pure black metal project entitled L'ACEPHALE. Their debut EP, *The Book of Lies*, obviously had some tender loathing care put into it (as well as some dough) with its gatefold design, insert, and of course, blood-colored

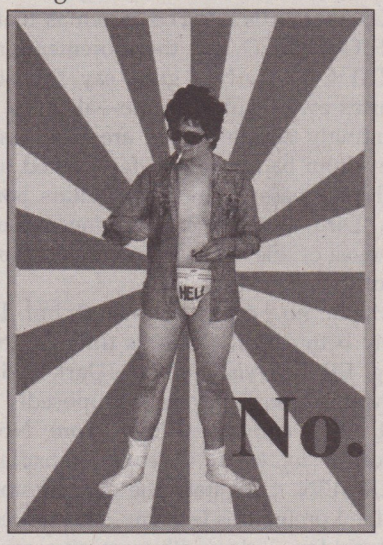
vinyl. Adding a guitarist from fellow Portland proponents of the black arts, FALL OF THE BASTARDS, L'ACEPHALE deliver two lengthy tracks of dark, evil, black metal hatred, appended with two spooky spoken word passages, the first in German, the second in what sounds like Norwegian or Swedish. There's definitely an effective mood of gloom about the whole proceedings, but my one point of criticism is that often the samples they use to achieve this (in particular, the distracting female operatic vocals on the title track) are too high in the mix and end up being overbearing, if not outright annoying. Really a minor point, though; this is still well worth sacrificing at least a goat or two for (Parasitic, www.parasiticrecords.com).

The final seven-inched slab of misanthropy this month comes courtesy of REINFECTION, whose previous full-length *They Die for Nothing* was one of the better, though relatively unknown death/grind releases from the ever-fertile Polish scene in '99. *Secondary Damage* (From Beyond/Displeased, www.displeasedrecords.com/ frombeyond) sees their return to the scene after a long hiatus (a new full length *Peace Through Killing* was also released earlier this year, which I completely missed) with four tracks of detuned, simple, but maniacally fast old-school death/grind. Nothing you haven't heard before, but it's executed perfectly with a great fuzzed-out guitar tone, brutal high and low vocals, and blasts so fast you can barely hear 'em.

Lastly, a quick mention about a better-than-average demo I received this month from a new Philadelphia trio affectionately dubbed REAL UGLY. Strangely, like a lot of demos received lately from bands like GOD$ DICK, I have a hard time pinning down REAL UGLY's sound. They've got female vocals that switch between a snotty punk delivery and grind growls with semi-understandable shouted choruses—choruses in the sense of the song title yelled a bunch o' times, e.g. "Zombie Pope." Some of the riffs are straight-forward hardcore punk, but the guitar's fairly heavy and the drummer blasts away to give 'em a grind edge. Still pretty rough, but sounds like they could be good given a little more practice time. Get in touch: leoracolby @msn.com.

Well, that's more than I have room for this month. I meant to get to all the Willowtip stuff that's come out recently, but I guess I'll have to be even tardier than usual in covering them. Got to see the phenomenal INSECT WARFARE play a warehouse show today after frustratingly missing them at the hopelessly sold out second night of the Super Sabado Fest here in the Bay Area this weekend. That pretty well made my day. Tomorrow's THE ENDLESS BLOCKADE and MUNICIPAL WASTE—that'll be even better than church.

Drop a line: Elliott Lange, 1320 Fulton St, San Francisco, CA 94117, USA, cromlaughs@hotmail.com



Until very recently, it seems as if weirdos and punks who wanted to avoid a "real" job ended up working twice as hard as they would in such a job by starting micro-businesses making buttons, T-shirts, records, etc. in pursuit of the ever-elusive "life with no boss." Lately, however, these old DIY values/methods (closely related to the classic Weberian protestant work ethic, interestingly enough) are being gradually replaced by a very different style of subsistence. My old friend Pablo, a hip San Francisco expat currently living in Berlin, seemingly gets by in his new foreign environment exclusively through scamming, borrowing, school loans, and pure chutzpah. To facilitate this, he has studiously established a distinct underground pseudo-celebrity persona and totally works it to get DJ gigs at hip bars, where he spins "punk" dance music for well-dressed art school students and the young(ish) professionals who buy them drinks. I have seen quite a few kids I know morph into this sort of "professional hipster" over the last few years as they age, with parental support dwindling, the aforementioned "real" jobs looking as unappetizing as ever, and the hard work of stridently self-sufficient DIY product production almost seeming like some contradictory hippie anachronism fit only to roll one's eyes at.

Now that we are officially a decade and a half into the mainstream commodification and fetishization of the underground music and art scenes, the ever-effusive quality of "cred" has taken on a potential economic and social prominence unparalleled in the past. It's almost as if the weird suspended-reality wonderland of Andy Warhol's Factory of the 1960s and early 1970s, where the importance of hipness came to outweigh the prerequisite of talent in the pursuit of patronage by young pretty "artists," has become the dominant precedent for purported art and music "underworlds" in cities across the world. For sure, young ne'er-do-wells everywhere have always found some way to avoid getting a job, but generally this involved the eventual sale of drugs, ass, or both. That is no longer necessarily the case. In this post-DIY world, one can coast for quite a while on pure "cred" alone, via associations with "legendary" figures and movements of a particular, often long-past, moment—or, indeed, by being one of those figures oneself.

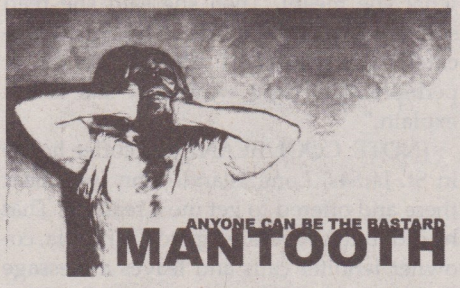
I could get all hyper socioeconomic-analysis on all this and talk about decadence, alienation from means of production, commodification of thought, post-modernism taken to its logical extremes, blah blah blah bullshit bullshit etc., but I won't. I just think it's really, really funny that people all over the world (particularly in the US and Europe) are now making something of a living by being professional bearers-of-cred. Pablo recently posted a notice on them thar internets that he was looking for an intern. Yes, an intern. I suppose that would technically be a DJ intern so he could have someone to fill in for him at bars when he's too hung over from the weekend's cocaine-fueled mayhem to make his Monday "vintage 60's Motown soul night" gig or something, but really. An intern. What would a bar DJ intern need to be taught? How to put a needle on a popular record? How to go from one song to another with a minimum time interval? How to determine which facial hair is appropriate at the moment? How to know which attractive bar patrons are best to pass one's extra drink tickets to?

Of course, none of this is really all that different from being, say, a singer in a semi-popular punk rock band, as I am. The prestige and "cred" I gain from this activity is vastly out of proportion to any actual display of so-called "talent," and in the end is more a product of relentless self-promotion than anything else. Yet my status might not be such that I could actively seek out interns for my position as a professional bearer-of-cred. That might be better left to

more successful (economically and otherwise) underground icons who came to prominence in the classic protestant DIY years of hard work and perseverance. For instance, how about Ian MacKaye, Kathleen Hanna, Greg Ginn, Jessica Hopper, Penelope Houston, Janelle Blarg, or Robert Eggplant? Sure, one could just apply for a job at these folks' record labels, send in submissions to their zines, try out for their new bands or whatnot in the effort to build one's own cred in the pre-existing framework. Ultimately, however, there is a limited supply of cred, much in the manner of a natural resource; there are only so many spaces open for bearers-of-cred, and eventually age and exhaustion will force the elders to retire. In the spirit of the new post-DIY hipster laziness, a world filled with bar DJs armed with "classic" punk records, derivative musicians who measure their worth by comparisons made of them with prominent artists of the past in magazines such as *MRR*, and writers who study the tiniest minutiae of Aaron Cometbus' handwriting style, why not just encourage people to apply for the actual position of the prominently cred-bearing person? After all, these bearers-of-cred work full-time jobs just being who they are, and surely should have the rights that other full-time workers have in our society—including a pension and perhaps Medicare.

Why shouldn't a young, starry-eyed art school student send in an application to begin an unpaid internship for the position of Jello Biafra, so Mr. Biafra could enjoy a nice early retirement to his palatial estate in San Francisco's Bernal Heights (bought for a song in the 1980s) while the new public persona continues on as...Jello Biafra? Even if it turns out that the student isn't cut out for the job, at least he or she got the vital experience (very important in our cred-as-commodity world) of being Jello Biafra for a while—and as we all know, experience is key in this cut-throat underground business world of cred trading, and getting a solid DJ job or MRR column without it is very difficult. Hell, now that I think about it, I might as well fill out an internship application for the position of Sam McPheeters. I've been shamelessly ripping the guy off for a decade now anyway, could badly use the cred-boost, and sure as shit don't want to start working 16+ hours a day making buttons for terrible bands. Of course, this will leave my low-level cred management position open, so if you want it you're welcome to train for it. I'm more than happy to give you an affidavit for school credit, but I gotta warn you that if you get the job most of the pay is in stale bread from the Semifreddi's dumpster in Emeryville. You'd better send in those internship forms quick, though, because once I start interning for Mr. McPheeters the whole thing could start to get really confusing.

—Johnny No Moniker/John Geek/etc. (the first), PO Box 3026, Oakland, CA. 94609 johngeek@hotmail.com, column archive, and internship application PDFs online at www.myspace.com/noarchive



GUITAR CENTER

Like any recent college graduate, I spend most of my days sitting around wondering how much brute man-force it would take to break the femurs of a living human being. You say you are a recent college graduate and do not think of such violent, disturbing acts? Then I'd say you most likely attended an institutional learning facility of a lower grade than I—in which case I would claim I could break your femurs with much more precision and ease.

Since I am the recipient of such a superior college education, I should let you know that the past few columns have not been written by myself, but by a hobo whom I have let live in my apartment in exchange for ghostwriting my columns. Only a man of cosmic intellect such as me could devise such a scheme to rid myself of the bothersome duty of delivering to you, the people, "shits and giggles." Unfortunately for me and my lackadaisical attitude towards responsibility, the hobo has been offered a paid writing position at *Punk Planet*, thus damning me to this purgatory of something or other.

Anyhow, post-graduation life is filled with many more gaps of free time than one would expect. Perhaps you would think that a college graduate such as me would spend his or her time toiling in the bowels of nascent adulthood, attempting to produce some semblance of achievement and self-worth? Perhaps, then, you would be wrong. *Dead wrong*. In fact, most of my days are spent pursuing the most inane and ignorant endeavors. For example, I have spent the last month holed up in my basement attempting to transform various metals and substances into gold. Upon realizing my struggle was the basis of modern chemistry, I emerged from my lair in search of John Madden and his tough acting Tinactin to combat the particularly vicious strain of jock itch that I had contracted. See – *inane, ignorant*. And now you get to read about it. Lucky you.

Perhaps one of my greatest achievements over the past few months has been the formation of my other band: GUITAR CENTER. Yes, named after the national chain of musical instrument retailers.

Now, Lord knows I'm no musician. You'd think I would have put my "superior college education" to use by perhaps learning how to play an instrument and not dupe the homeless into writing my column. Perhaps, then, you would be wrong for the second time this month. No, instead I have spent my time wallowing in the pits of musical instrument retail in search of the purest form of wankery known to man. And that form is GUITAR CENTER.

I formed GUITAR CENTER with relative ease. So much ease that it would require me to use more than half of this column to transition to my main point, which is GUITAR CENTER.

Anyone who has walked into a Guitar Center knows that, at any given time, some guy is going to be plugged into a practice amp with a $1,500 guitar, playing "Cemetery Gates" by Pantera over and over again. Or any other Pantera tune you request. Or Metallica's "Enter Sandman." Or any other post-*Black Album* Metallica "composition" for that matter. There will be so much feedback that it will make you wonder why Pissed Jeans even bothers anymore.

At the same time, you know that some guy across the store is going to slapping away on the bass like he is LARPing Les Claypool.

And *you know* there is some asshole who doesn't know how to play drums sitting at a drum set banging away at the cowbell because he saw that one *Saturday Night Live* sketch about Blue Oyster Cult and he thinks it's so just so goddamn fucking hilarious. "More cowbell!" he's saying to his bored girlfriend.

And *you know* anyone who walks through the front door would be willing to be the singer. And if there isn't anyone walking through the door at that particular moment, you could just as well assume that Axl Rose is the singer because *you know* there is a tape loop of Guns 'n' Roses videos playing throughout the store.

I knew this. So I went into Guitar Center to form a band consisting of these three archetypal music store characters and called it GUITAR CENTER. My new band would never play a show, but only practice rigorously at Guitar Center as GUITAR CENTER. GUITAR CENTER would talk about this dude they know who does recording for real cheap (at Guitar Center) and could probably get this dude they know to do some artwork for their demo CD-R. Tension would mount. Tempers would flare. Effects pedals would be abused.

GUITAR CENTER eventually did put together an album, but never got around to recording the *Guitar Straps with Skulls and Shit on Them* LP. Rumor has it that some of the members moved to Canada to start some band called Fucked Up.

In the end, GUITAR CENTER imploded because of "creative differences," but we all know the real reason why the band broke up: Mantooth couldn't write himself out of an ill-conceived column.

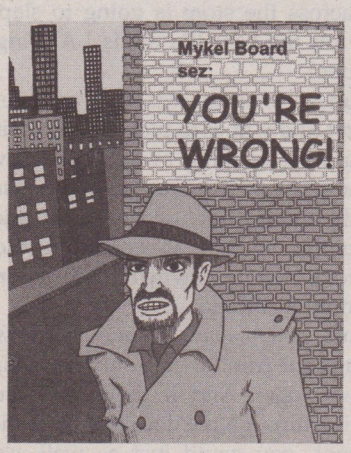
Look for a GUITAR CENTER reunion at this year's Philly Fest.

ENDNOTES:

1) The Endless Blockade/Warzone Womyn split LP has been officially repressed. Look for it either through Ebullution or contact outoflimits@gmail.com for a copy.
2) Negative Tom.
3) One of my New Years resolutions is to not write my column at the last minute.
4) Chastise me at
gregory.mantooth @gmail.com

My advice to you…Get people to think you're a drunken no-good lush… slightly cracked… with a bit of the jailbird thrown in.

—Celine



I'm happier than a urophile at a beerfest. A reputation! Yowsah. When people know *about* you without having met you. When people assume rumors are true. When people deal with you based on your image rather than the reality. That's a reputation. It shows you've lived larger than your life. Oh boy!

It's John's voice on the answering machine.

"Mykel," he says, "I did some investigating and found out why they cancelled you at COOL BEANZ. I talked with Jennifer and first she told me they dropped you because you're *too right-wing*. I thought that was kind of strange. So I asked her what she meant. Then she said she read something on the internet. That you advocated pedophilia. I didn't get how pedophilia is right wing, but she didn't explain."

[NOTE: COOL BEANZ is a coffee house in St. James, Long Island. John lives near there and offered to get me a reading. That he did. But just before I go to California, co-owner Jennifer calls and leaves a message that she's "canceling me out" of the show she had booked. She gives no reason, but does say, "Call me later if you want to talk about it."

I plan to call her when I get back from my trip. I figure it's a scheduling conflict, and we can reschedule.

What a joy to learn the *real* reason!

I call John back to get the details.

"John," I ask, "did she read something I wrote or did she read *about* me?"

"It was something you, wrote," he says. "I think it was a column she found on the internet."

"Every column is on the internet," I tell him. "You'd have to look pretty hard to find one on children's rights. I've *never* written one "supporting pedophilia."

Since that time, I googled *"Mykel Board" and Pedophilia* together. I found 25 sites. None of them are columns. When I look for *"Mykel Board"* by itself, I get 10,200 responses. Hmmm.

What's fair is fair though. Jennifer runs the club and has a right to can people for any reason. Insufficient butt-wiping. Severe acne. Anything. But at least she should ask me to contact her, so she can find the horse's opinions from the horse's mouth.

I call her at the club number.

"Cool Beanz, Pat speaking, may I help you?"

"Hi, is Jennifer there?"

"She won't be in until 2:30. Is there something I can help you with?"

"I'm not sure," I say. "I was supposed to read there but was cancelled. I heard it was for political reasons. I'm calling to check on that. Do you know what I'm talking about?"

"I'm afraid not," Pat answers. "Give me your number and I'll ask her to call you when she gets in."

I give her my number.

"I'll let her know you called. Thank you," answers Pat

It's a week later. No answer.

And HAPPY NEW YEAR! I write this on X-mas day. The city is quiet. The supremely entertaining transit strike is over. I begged $500 out of Dad for Chanukah so I could bring my checking account up to zero. I've got a reputation! Everything is right with the world. I'm skipping goyish X-mas and going right to New Year's. And New Year's is the time for resolutions.

Everybody makes New Year's resolutions for themselves. Stop smoking. Get serious about schoolwork. See a doctor about that wound oozing pus. *I will A. I will B.* One after the other, you promise yourself to do something that you know will never get done. By January 5th, the resolutions are as dead as GG Allin.

I've also decided to make New Year's resolutions. But not in the boring old way. I already know what I want to do and won't. I don't need to resolve it.

Instead, I'm gonna make resolutions for *you*. Here are seven things I resolve for *you* to do during the next year. No *I will*, but *YOU will.*

RESOLUTION NUMBER 1: It's probably against the law for me to make this resolution, so I won't. If it were legal I'd say your resolution is: *You will buy a kid a beer.*

My adventure with the COOL BEANZ cafe once again shows that *kids* is one topic where logic dies. It's where people, who pride themselves on reason, drop that reason and turn shrill. Where unAmericans suddenly become very American. Where defenders of free speech become censors. Where defenders of human rights become dictators.

The age of consent in Holland is 12 years old. For reasons I've often discussed, I believe that's too old, but it is logical. The body changes at 12. Puberty hits at 12. Jewish boys, one year later, recite at their bar mitzvah: TODAY I AM A MAN. Makes perfect sense. But not in America.

It's not only sex. At every turn from driving, to forced "education," to laws about alcohol and tobacco. Kids are the only group where discrimination is *required by law.*

How can you support freedom for prisoners of war, but not the most oppressed prisoners of peace: *kids?* Do your part! Buy 'em a beer!

RESOLUTION NUMBER 2: *You will voice your support for Saddam Hussein.*

It's not enough to be against the war in Iraq. Everybody and his Aunt Tilly is against the war in Iraq. You should go further.

Saddam changed Iraq. He brought rights to women, tearing away the veil. He stood up to the Americans, a David against a hugely bullying Goliath. On trial, he refuses to knuckle under. He fights for his homeland. He denies accusations. He willingly goes forward, despite the already decided verdict. Defense attorneys are getting knocked off one after the other. But there he stands, a beacon of hope to a world bullied into submission by a bunch of oil companies.

RESOLUTION NUMBER 3: *You will give money to a bum every day.*

I don't know about your town, but here in New York there are different kinds of bums. There are the salesmen bums who sift through garbage (or steal stuff), then resell it on the street. There are the musicians, who stand with a two-string guitar and sing *Me and Bobby McGee* 300 times a day. There are the subway crawlers, who go from car-to-car guilting passengers into giving money because they "just got out of the hospital, have no money, and the same thing could happen to you." And there are the plain old bums, who say hello, shake a cup, and don't really ask for anything.

To discourage the work ethic, I only give to plain old bums. It's the ideal economic arrangement. I give because I want to give. No product changes hands. No environmental damage is done. I feel better having given out of my own free will. The recipient feels better having received without degrading himself in something as horrible as work.

Giving money to a bum every day—and talking about it—encourages others to do the same. It encourages bum-dom. It encourages an ethic where we don't live our lives as a series of trades for *things*. But where we give and receive only because we exist.

RESOLUTION NUMBER 4: *You will fuck at least one stranger every month, preferably someone of another race or from another culture.*

What could be ruttier than monogamy? The same peg in the same hole, day after day. What could lead to stagnation, boredom, and conservativism quicker than sexual fidelity?

Sex is one of life's greatest adventures. It's the most intimate contact one person can have with another. How can you learn about other people, other cultures, other ways of living, if you don't become intimate with them?

It's hard for me to imagine there are Americans who have never had sex with someone of another race. Let's get this clear: not having sex with another race is as racist as not working with another race or not eating at the same table as another race.

There's a cliché about not criticizing people until you've walked a mile in their shoes. That cliché doesn't go far enough. You cannot criticize—or understand—others until you've tasted their bodily fluids. Your narrow view will remain narrow unless you expand it in the most intimate way possible.

RESOLUTION NUMBER 5: *You will assume whatever most of your friends think is wrong.*

Like a Zen slap, we all need a little awakening from our every day assumptions. During the recent NY transit strike, the union was only trying to tread water. They had bad pay, but good benefits: a 55-year-old retirement policy, 100 percent healthcare: what most of us would want if we had no other choice than to work.

Management wanted to take away these benefits—or at least weaken them. Not for current workers, but for future workers. They wanted to lower the future quality of life.

Most New Yorkers supported management. They felt *I don't have a 55-year-old retirement policy. I don't have free healthcare. Why should these people have it?* At the same time, they called the union *selfish*, for protecting others.

Huh? Who's selfish? A public who says *because I can't have these benefits, no one can?* Or a union who says *we already have these things, we want to make sure those who come after us have them too.*

I saw a report on TV. Most white folks were against the strike. Most colored people supported it. Hmmmm.

Every daily newspaper, and all my friends except one Negress, were against the union. They were all wrong. That's usually the case.

Don't know what to think? Find out what most people believe. The opposite will be true.

RESOLUTION NUMBER 6: *You will drink every day and get completely soused at least once a week.*

There are very few ways you can rebel in today's world. Both leftists and rightists have assholes closed tighter than a leather band around an Iraqi's neck. It's a remnant of Puritanism that sticks in the brain of anyone who lives in this country.

"Anything that makes your body feel good is bad," they say. Instead of regulating actions, they regulate *conditions*. Do you need a license to sell Pepsi? A Pepsi is much worse for you than a Brooklyn Lager. But a Pespi doesn't make you feel good, so the regulators don't care.

(Yeah, I know. But it won't be long before you *will* need a license to sell MONSTER. Get it while you can!)

In the meantime, you need to show that you are in charge of your life—not *them*. You need to fracture the 12-step myth of helplessness. You need to shatter the teetotalers' perverted logic that *not* drinking is somehow keeping control of yourself.

Not drinking is giving up control. It's making a rule that says I DON'T DO THIS and blindly following that rule. You cannot live a full life by following rules... even rules you think you make for yourself.

No one would make a no-drinking rule for themselves unless: (A) they were actually allergic to alcohol, (B) Social or peer pressure made them *think* they were choosing such a rule.

RESOLUTION SEVEN: *You will masturbate every day—sex or not. At least once a week, you'll do it in a location you never did it before.*

Sexual energy is like a sunflower. If you keep it hidden, in the shade, without exposure, it will droop and die. If you expose it, it stands straight, tall and beautiful.

If you see a sunflower every day, you begin to take it for granted. There's that sunflower, in the same garden, next to the same petunia. It moves back, away from your consciousness until you don't even notice it any more.

But move the sunflower. Put it on the window ledge. In your bathroom. Stick it on top of the computer monitor. It remains fresh. An exciting part of your life.

How many people jerk off to the same movie, at the same time, every day? It puts you to sleep. Some people *use* it to put them to sleep. Why?

Like booze, masturbation is how we can give ourselves pleasure. It is a great tool of stimulation, excitement, adventure. It's a tragedy if it becomes boring.

Jerk off at work, in the office supply room. At school, under the desk in physics class. Outside, in a park. In the car. In a restaurant bathroom. Masturbation will be an adventure, a thrill, like it was when you discovered it. Send me a video.

OK. Those are your New Year's resolutions. Have a good one.

ENDNOTES: [*Visitors to my website: mykelboard.com or subscribers (email to: god@mykelboard.com) will receive hot links to some of the topics here. Visitors to my blog (you can get it through the website) can comment on the column… or anything else.*]

—> *Give her a call dept:* Jennifer, the woman who disinvited me to speak at the COOL BEANZ CAFE, has not returned my call. Her number is (631) 862-4111. Maybe you'll have better luck than I did. If you talk with her, don't be insulting. It's her right to invite or not. It's her cafe. But do ask her why I was disinvited and if speakers are usually chosen for their politics. Then email me her answer: god@mykelboard.com.

—> *Discovered by accident dept:* My new favorite website is *www.landoverbaptist.org*. It's a Christian parody site, that comes up on internet searches looking very real. It's like THE ONION, but only for Christianity. Their sub-heading is *The Largest, Most Powerful Assembly of Worthwhile People to Ever Exist. Unsaved are NOT Welcome!*

My current favorite article is about how eight-year old girls are getting pregnant from listening to Ricky Martin songs. Pure genius!

—> *Ambiguity in Motion Dept:* The METRO newspaper in NY reports that Russia plans to launch a "tourist police corps." The corps will be formed from English-speaking students who patrol tourist areas. They'll get a salary and uniforms. It's not clear whether or not they'll get guns. Few Russian police can speak English, which, according to the paper, hampers the security situation in the city. The paper doesn't say if the Tourist Police are there to police those who prey on the tourists, or the tourists themselves.

—> *Mickey Mouse This, Asshole! Dept:* A Disneyland worker in Hong Kong climbed to the top of a tower on the Space Mountain ride. He was carrying a knife and a banner that said BLOOD and TRUTH in Chinese. Police talked him down after more than two hours. His action came a week after Hong Kong unions officially complained about the horrible working conditions at the park. Mickey Mouse had no comment.

—> *Is your printer watching you Dept:* The website at: http://www.eff.org/Privacy/printers/list.php shows a list of printers that do (or don't) embed codes in printed documents allowing government (and other) agencies to track the origin of the document. Beware!! Your own printer is probably watching you.

—> Jimmy Reject of *Proud Disgrace Fanzine* infamy sent me a ton of stuff including 40 pages of things I shouldn't mention. The new *Proud Disgrace* has an interview with *me*. (He calls me a pedophile!) You can download his new novel from lulu.com. That guy is prolific!! Email him at: rejectone@aol.com. AOL???? It must be a free account!

—> *I Love Being Me Dept:* I got a letter from a prisoner whose name I won't release without his permission. He says he's not allowed to have zines in prison and asked for me to send my column on paper. He writes:

I love your foulness. You just don't give a fuck. You're real to the point and totally out of the closet—ever pushing boundaries. You're the real sexual outlaw.

OK, stroke me.

But there's more. … *your openness has helped me understand my desires and know they're natural. I have wondered, 'cause I lost my virginity to a family pet—a female dog named Spot…*

Letters like that make me feel almost as good as getting disinvited to a reading. Yeah!

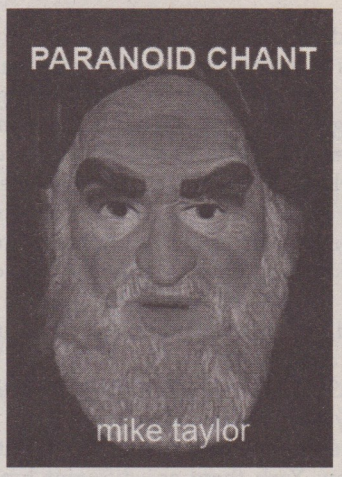
—> *Hardcore hardness dept:* They have the best band name I've heard in a long time: THE TWATS. On *Overdose On Records* Records, they have a girl singer and a song that reveals the real truth of rock'n'roll: *Only In This To Get Laid.* Female singer, loud and fast. Yeah! The big question, of course, is Does it Work?

—> *Ask and ye shall receive dept:* In MRR 271, I complained about the dearth of Spanish-singing bands. Not long after, my pal Tomasso (from *Trust Magazine* in Germany) emailed me about Ruidosa Inmundicia, who he says are "hands down the best band on the globe." Two members are originally from Chile, but they live in Austria. Demos are at www.ruidosainmundicia.net.

And last week I got a cassette from Megan, part of an all-girl (maybe lesbian, I can't figure it out) hardcore band from Chicago called *Condenada.* They sing in both English and Spanish. (Contact them at: PO Box 5027, Chicago IL 60680.)

Not only did Megan send me the band's cassette, she sent me a lyric booklet and a list of Spanish-singing punk bands. Of course I know Huasipungo in New York, but *Punkeke* in Minneapolis? Who would've guessed? Thanks, girls.

And for all you world punk rockers, if you wanna sing in English to reach more people, OK, I understand. But sing a few in your own language. You speak it better. And your fellow countrymen need the inspiration. As for Spanish—that's the *world* language. If you can sing in it, *do*!



There was only one crippling headache. Just like that. Like turning a switch. Like something that was not at all there, and then, it is. There, simply. My temples iced over and my brain itself became the vise. I poured a cup of water from the faucet, downed it, and repeated. It was a few minutes past midnight, so I said fuck it and called it a day.

Besides that one headache, that one night, after too many beers and too little water and dancing at the Konono #1 show, quitting coffee wasn't that hard. It wasn't like a long, divorcing process. It was just something I knew needed to happen.

If you adhere to traditional Chinese medicine, coffee strips your essence. It's the one terrible habit that you just shouldn't do. Coffee gnaws at your very root, and your kidneys. If you place your trust in Western medicine, the corrective over the preventative, coffee simply dehydrates and is to be enjoyed in moderation. If you are the punx, coffee is a right, the one thing that should be free at every restaurant, gas station, and relative's house. Dude, I've worked at cafes! It's cheaper than water to make! Coffee is the DIY anti-depressant for a nation of indigent depressives, the magical creative waters for a people whose only trade is often their predilection for creative pursuits. But dude, that shit was fucking me up.

I traded Double Ears some artwork for a mountain of coffee from the shop where she works. She was sending it to me every couple of weeks. Whole beans of all varieties with short descriptions like prescriptions. My medicine. I don't know if I told her I won't need the rest, but she reads this, so there. Done.

I drank a *lot* of coffee. Not, like, a

Cometbus lot, because I also drink a lot of water, because humans have to, but like, a lot. And strong. "Hot, good coffee," just like that Jawbreaker song about being deliberately alone for a day. Simple truisms for a simple habit. Now I drink a cup a week, because I fancy myself the kind of person who doesn't really quit doing anything. Moderation, right? Moderation itself in moderation. I feel guilty. I feel like I'm betraying some code. No, not guilty, I guess; more like misplaced. Like waking up with strange clothes on. But here is the thing: I started flipping out. Heart racing, short-of-breath-without-reason freakouts. Not knowing when it's going to quit, unable to reason or relax myself, panic attacks. These are common. Many people mistake them for heart attacks and many people go to the emergency room and get shot up with drugs to cope, amassing unreasonable debt. Mostly these episodes are caused by stress, but there are hereditary reasons. I do *not* go the hospital. Period. Not just because I have no money, but because I don't trust that shit and I've never been hard enough against the coals to suspend my disbelief. So I did some reading, and all sources, regardless of the ideology from which they come, agree with what I knew but ignored since I was in eighth grade: coffee isn't that good for you.

OK, we all know that. The punxes, however, don't care what is good for them. Live for now, no future, etc. I myself have gone on casual record numerous times as saying that I would gladly trade some slow years off the end of my lifespan for the creative, prolific years of the now. Coffee consumption, as espoused by the Nation of Ulysses Program to Destroy America to which I adhered as an 18-year-old, allows wholesale denial of the workaday construct. I just can't do it anymore.

OK, I'm at peace with that now. No problem. Coming up on thirty, if you want to stay out of doctors' offices, take care of your own damn self, no matter how uncool it feels. OK. But what about the fact that I've broken the ice with selling off my record collection? I mean, not the whole thing, that's not my goal. I'm not one of those burn-it-onto-a-hard-drive-for-posterity, sell-the-record guys. I want the item. But I only want the good ones. I don't want records from my friends' bands anymore, you know? I mean, if their bands are good, yes, but not just because my friends released a record. Sorry, y'all.

Anyway, what I'm thinking about isn't coffee or records at all. I'm thinking about the juvenile romance we have with the ephemeral and fugitive qualities of our common chosen path. Like, how the fuck can we continue into adulthood squeezing meaning from a cultural splinter that burst forth with a resounding *no future.* Because there obviously is one, and we knew it all along or we wouldn't have said that other thing. The punk ostrich proclivity for tunnel vision protectionism is not a philosophy with an encouraging shelf life. "It used to be us and them, and you and me," and there remains a kernel of truth in that. But it's the same variety of truth that is found and misinterpreted in biblical texts. These are words of inspiration, *not* a literal blueprint for mapping out one's future (remember the future). So having said all that, Top Ten For 2005!!! (*not* in order of greatness, just ten good things):

1. Konono #1 live at the Somerville Theater, Somerville, MA.
2. Black Flag, live in Arizona, 1982. Henry burned me this CD last night. It's a soundboard recording with Rollins on vocals and some drummer that is not Robo or Bill Stevenson. I don't know who it is, but he makes the songs that would end up on My War twice as propulsive, and breathes new life into the classics.
3. Make Believe, Shock of Being LP
4. Lungfish, Feral Hymns LP
5. Lungfish, live on my birthday / Daniel Higgs solo
6. Finally reading The Master and Margarita by Bulgakov
7. Om, Variations on a Theme
8. Lightning Bolt, Hypermagic Mountain LP
9. Joan Didion, writer and human.
10. Dynasty (One) live every time except for Halloween, which wasn't as good as the other three times I saw them. This is also a tie with Byron House live at Zane's house, Dec 9.

Write: PO Box 28226, Providence, RI 02908

Red Sky at Night

December 28

Tonight the sky is burning red through the windows.

The clouds are thick and low, an eerie crimson fog, lit up by the reflection of San Francisco's city lights. I can't sleep, although it is past five in the morning. It is the between time—the last hours of the late night, the first hours of the new day. I close my eyes, laying in the dark, awake, listening to the rain hit glass and trickle down the side of the house.

I am falling through time. It is this damn red sky, undoing the solid present.

December 9

I am standing outside, on the small backyard porch of the La Rivolta house in Boston, wearing my enormous black overcoat, the warm padded hood drawn over my head. I'm smoking, a damn addict, looking out into our small yard with the stone fence for the thousandth time.

The blizzard hit this afternoon, at first coming down as sleet and cold rain. An hour later the storm changed—the sky was filled with large snowflakes, the sky a solid white. It was snowing and lightening at the same time, thunder roaring and shaking the house.

It surprised us all—no one could remember the last time a thunderstorm and snow collided.

Now, hours later, everything is calm.

It is almost dark, but the snow and the clouds reflect the city lights and the setting sun. The ground, the tree limbs, the roofs of our neighbors' houses, and the sky are all a thick grey white.

It is cold, about 26 degrees, and even wearing the thick coat, my fingers are complaining, going numb, exposed to the chill air.

My breath comes out in warm clouds, and I look out at the telephone poll, at the edge of our yard. It is a May Pole of industrial wires—electric, cable, who knows what else—reaching out in all directions, dozens of black thick lines going out from the old wood, connecting outwards to the surrounding six houses.

This image is burned into my mind, the old tree now felled, striped naked and the skeleton stood up again. Bound by man's modern world, its branches replaced by wires.

Black wires crossing the gray sky, white snow covering all. I stand shivering in the cold, looking at the night, and wonder what my future holds.

I exhale, and the steam rises.

December 9

Finally, finally, finally.

I have forced myself into a corner with pen and paper in hand. This month has passed like the low-lying clouds at night. November was gray, with sparkles of blue. I was engulfed into Boston again, wrapped up and surrounded by the moist cold breeze, heralded by sea gulls, cracked asphalt and the morning light that comes

through my bedroom windows.

I am leaving soon.

I try to catch a few images in my mind, always the rough notes, a sketch, a tiny chunk of life.

November 30

It was warm, a high of 58 degrees, but rain. It was my last day working downtown as a bike courier.

A steady flow of water from the sky–from light rain, to a downpour, to almost clearing up, back to a torrent.

Riding a bike all over the city, it felt like I was swimming through the streets. I didn't mind so much, as I wore my rain pants (like a raincoat for your legs) and my favorite yellow and black raincoat, still asphalt stained from my crash a few months ago. I was a bumblebee slowly slogging through the storm.

I'm stopped at a red light on Atlantic Avenue. A four-lane highway running north-south on the far eastern edge of downtown, connecting the wharfs, and bringing traffic from the interstates in and out of downtown.

The traffic is waiting for the light, and there is nowhere to go. In front of me is a large delivery truck, the metal loading dock bar about the height of my chest. Next to the truck is a cab, a white sedan, wide and clunky, with the lighted advertising sign on top. The common cab–an old police car, now looking like a bloated white shark.

Water drips off my hat brim, my hands have been wet on the handlebars for the last six hours. I'm tired and I wait for the light to change.

Construction. On my right, cement barriers line the side of the road with a chain link fence on the other side. There is no room to pass the cab or the truck in front of me, so I'm stopped. I wait, one foot on the ground.

Less than eight feet away to my left, the teeth of an enormous backhoe lifts up and cracks the asphalt of the road like hardened skin. A huge older man sits in the operator's cabin, smoking a cigar.

It is like standing next to an earthquake, the ground suddenly is torn open and ripped apart, I can feel the road shaking and groaning under my feet.

The man puffs on his cigar and the road breaks, a deafening sound of metal scraping on asphalt.

By four thirty, it is dark. The city transforms into a million points of light, grids of florescent from the skyscrapers.

The roads are filled with the fucking traffic of all the office workers leaving at the same time. Speeding from underground parking garages, in a hurry. They will all pile onto the highways and leave the city, back to their comfortable suburban homes.

The intersections are filled with black umbrellas and a sea of suits. I guage the human tide and cut through the moving crowd without losing speed, seeing the holes with my wide gaze, taking in all the pedestrians at once–as you must–as they are not looking at you, the road, or anything but their feet, and thinking of home, work or cell phones.

November 18

Time moves quickly–wheels rotate with speed and suddenly I am somewhere else.

CITIZEN FISH is playing on my fucked up stereo box. I am lying in my bed; beat down from a long day. It all blurs together in my mind, downtown at 99 Summer, 10 High, 50 Rowes Wharf, One Boston Place, 18 Tremont, walking through the underground basement of International Place, getting packages x-rayed in the basement of the Federal Reserve, going down tree-lined Comm Ave. to Kenmore, going around the tourists on Newberry Street, crossing the Charles on the Mass. Ave. bridge off to Harvard Square…

Recently, life seems cheap downtown.

It is dog eat dog everywhere. Drivers are not looking for bikers—especially the cabs—no turn signals, no looking in mirrors before turning corners or opening doors, no worries except for themselves and getting somewhere faster.

So many couriers have been hit by cars. John is a well-known bike courier, having worked downtown for years. Now, he is in the hospital with staples holding his skull together. Last thing he remembers on his bike is someone opening a door on Beacon Street.

Do most bike couriers have health insurance? No. Free healthcare? No.

The bike courier has to pay the hospital bills for getting hit.

November 7

I saw a man in the middle of Boylston Street, by the Boston Public Library. Two cops were forcefully holding him down.

The man was on his knees, his head near the road. One cop was yelling at the man, holding something in the captured man's face. Sirens screamed from a nearby cop car and an undercover SUV was showing its cop lights from under the grill.

On the corner of Kneeland and Harris, in Chinatown, I saw a woman puking.

The puke was falling from her mouth onto the street. She didn't really bend over, just tilted her head forward. I was waiting for traffic to clear and turn left, watching her from the other side of the road. She puked a stream of shit three times, then, when the light changed, crossed the street.

November 16

Cold and wet day. Sitting in Copley Square, smoking a cigarette.

Sitting on the steps of the old church, waiting for another job. The day is dreary and has been raining on and off all day.

The only tourists left from the fall are the pros–a group of Japanese with cameras and well-fitting jackets, looking as if they are still enjoying being outside and exploring Boston.

There is a homeless man sleeping on a bench, thick wool green army blankets piled over him. His shoes and a few plastic bags are stuffed under the bench to keep dry.

One tourist took a picture of his friend, who was on his cell phone, waving, smiling, laughing–pointing down at the homeless man, who was sleeping on a bench in the cold rain.

November 15

The *Eyes Wide Shut* traveling exhibit by the American Friends Service Committee is set up in Copley. Rows and rows of black army boots cover the wide brick plaza in front of the church, as if in formation, and march into the grass of the park. Each pair of boots represents a US soldier killed in Iraq, and the number has just reached over two thousand.

There is also a large pile of civilian shoes of every size and type–tumbled and thrown together in a grotesque sort of way, an image reminiscent of the Nazi's hoarding shoes before the gas chambers–representing the thousands of Iraqi civilians who have been killed in the war.

Names of the dead were read through a microphone and speakers. Most of the soldiers are twenty, twenty-one, twenty-three years old.

The names of civilian Iraqis are read as well. Eight year olds, teenagers, adults, old people. The list of names is endless.

A group holding a sign with "wailing women" walked slowly around the square, twenty women dressed in black with a few men.

Many people who walked by stopped, and looked at the boots and the shoes.

The names and ages and places of death being announced through the PA system went on and on, endless and tragic, until I had to leave.

December 17

I am so happy to be listening to punk right now. It was just exactly what I need-

ed.

Layla is playing "Damaged Goods" by GANG OF FOUR on the turntable, and it rocks. We are in the MRR radio room, where the show is being recorded onto a CD to send out to stations and to be put on the Internet. It is the end of her "insanely thrashing set" for MRR Radio #964.

Layla's final biting comments make us all laugh, and she passes on the microphone to Golnar who is up next, playing new US punk tunes.

Fred then puts on a set of Florida hardcore, and then, it's my turn!

I decided to play my favorite bands that reminded me of traveling this summer: BEHIND ENEMY LINES – "The Global Cannibal," POST REGIMENT–"Skad Ty Mieszkasz," VICTIMS – "Scars," KOCHISE – "Aujourd Hui Est Demain," and of course ZOUNDS – "This Land."

Paul finished up the set with Australian punk, and of course you can listen to all of this noise on www.maximumrocknroll. com.

One of the great things about being on the radio show is looking through the MRR record collection. It is beyond massive. The green taped records are on wire metal shelves about six feet high, and stretch down one long wall. Walking from one end of the collection to the other, I counted twenty-eight paces, about 84 feet. Hmm, a very rough estimation…that's about 420 square feet of punk records!

Another thing you should know about MRR is that it takes a lot of people to make this magazine every month. Talking to Golnar, I've learned more about how the magazine works, and how there is always something to do. Take another look at the long list of shitworkers on the front page!

January 4

Sitting in Café La Onda, at 16th and Valencia, drinking coffee and writing in my book. It is a nice open and welcoming place, with couches and stuffed chairs and odd small tables with wooden chairs. They play quirky music and the coffee is good, and refills are fifty cents.

I've been here for hours, watching people come and go as I write. There are old and new political posters on the walls, "Our Grief is Not a Cry for War," "No Blood for Oil" and so on. People talk in low friendly tones, read or work on laptops. I like this place.

Think I'll go get another cup of coffee.

As I finish this, I ask myself, "What the hell has happened to my column? Is it all random thoughts these days? Is it all just crap?"

It seems I have simply continued my journal from tour, taking notes on the world I see around me. In many ways, I feel I am still on tour, but this has become my life. I am not home, not settled, wondering what will happen next. My home has become where I am.

Sometimes I am so stressed I can't sleep, looking for a place to live, looking for a job, working on my video projects and hoping to hell I can make this documentary rock.

Sometimes I miss my friends so much, thinking of Boston, Bremen, London, wishing I could be there.

But I am growing, I am learning more every day, feeling secure on my own, outside my old habits and haunts, away from the close comfort of old friends.

Yesterday, I worked on my video project for hours, until I was totally burnt out, my eyes weary from looking at the damn computer screen.

Then, I said to myself, "Damn it, to hell with this, I need to get out of the house and see San Fran." So, I grabbed my bag, had a coffee, put on some lipstick, laced up my boots and took myself out for a date.

I went to the Zeitgeist, the best "punk" and biker bar dive in the city, and had a couple of beers. I like this place, as I've been there every time the Profits would come into town on tour. They have a large outside patio, good beers and a decent jukebox, and veggie burgers for five bucks. Not bad. So I went alone, read the paper, talked to the bartender, listened to music, had a couple of smokes outside. It was relaxing.

After a couple of cheap tofu tacos, decided one more beer was in order on the way home. So I went to the Lexington, an infamous dyke bar on Lexington Street that I've been hoping to check out for some time.

It was fairly packed, a small bar full of women of various ages, sizes, and styles, and the vibe was friendly and sociable. I felt a little like a woman on the prowl, arriving single, but hey, I was taking myself out.

Can you blame a girl who just got into town?

I met a few people while drinking my beer, had a couple of nice conversations, only because I got up the courage to ask a cute woman in a sparkling tank top who was sitting by herself, "Mind if I join you?"

January 5

Today was the first day San Francisco started to feel like home.

It was grey, but not raining, a good day for biking. I started off heading for the Golden Gate Park, looking forward to a relaxing bike ride under trees.

But by the time I got to Castro I changed my mind, and headed east towards downtown. I went down Market Street for the first time, one of the main arteries in the city. It was crowded with cars, cabs, commuters on bikes, bike couriers, buses and trolley cars. I kept any eye out for the evil looking trolley tracks on the road, and the unfamiliar intersections.

Although in a different place, I felt at home on my bike, tall buildings passing overhead. I rode to the end of Market, where it meets the Bay.

Near the Ferry Building there was a quiet stretch of dock, and I stood there for a few minutes, taking in the view. It reminded me of Long Wharf–but on the other side of the continent, three thousand miles away, bordering another ocean.

The Golden Gate Bridge was stretched out in front of me, much larger than I remember. Sea gulls screamed as they rode the air currents, and I watched the ferries come in from Oakland, cruising through dark steel water.

Upcoming Events

La Rivolta! Boston's (second annual) Anarcha-Feminist festival will happen March 4th. Hell ya!

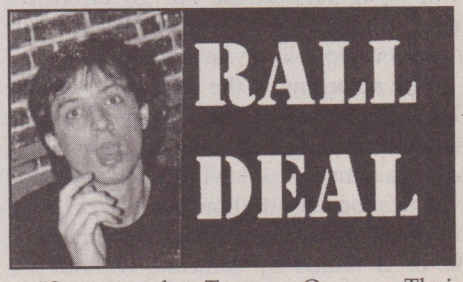
The event is a collective endeavor, and looking for ideas for workshops. "Your participation is vital to creating an event where we can learn from each other's experience and struggles, gather our energy, remember revolutionary women's history, and celebrate international resistance to patriarchy, capitalism, racism and homophobia. La Rivolta continues!"
www.larivolta.org.

Also, a reminder, the Bay Area Anarchist Bookfair is on March 18th. Go to www.bayareaanarchistbookfair.com for more info. Good speakers, many tables, and even a bike valet service this year.

End

Cheers to the punks worldwide! Next month I'll stop talking about rain, I promise. Solidarity against the hierarchy, enjoy life, live large

—Erika (e_bitchcrew@yahoo.com)



"Support the Troops, Oppose Their Actions," reads the oxymoronic headline of an April 2005 essay at www.antiwar.com.

In a column titled "Support Our Troops, Not Our President," liberal columnist Richard Reeves worries about Iraq war vets: "They will come home to be called 'torturers,' as Vietnam vets were called 'baby killers.'" To avoid repeating the supposed excesses of the 60s peace movement, today's antiwar groups praise the soldiers fighting the wars they abhor.

"What if they gave a war," a poster of the Vietnam era asked, "and nobody came?" If we are, as Jean-Paul Sartre posited, defined by our actions, most of the blame for the murder of more than 100,000 Iraqis belongs to our top government officials. But Bush's armchair warriors couldn't have invaded Iraq without a compliant and complicit United States military—one that, it should be noted, is all-volunteer. These individuals, who enjoy free will, fire the guns and drop the bombs. If personal responsibility is to have any meaning, the men and women of our armed forces have to be held individually accountable for the carnage.

"Supporting our troops while opposing their actions may seem contradictory," argues Joshua Frank in the antiwar.com article. "The duties of US soldiers in Iraq are wrong and many may be committing horrible crimes against humanity. True. But soldiers are mostly not bad people (though, of course, some are)." How is a person who voluntarily commits "horrible crimes against humanity" not a "bad person"?

Even if US forces were not violating the rules of war in Iraq—torturing, maiming, and murdering POWs, robbing and subjecting civilians to collective punishment, dropping white phosphorus and depleted uranium bombs on civilian targets—the war itself, based on false pretenses and opposed by the United Nations, would remain a gross violation of American and international law.

Soldiers, they say, must obey orders. However, "just following orders" wasn't an acceptable excuse at the Nuremberg trials, where the charges included waging a war of aggression. Do our government's poorly paid contract killers deserve our "support" for blindly following orders?

Not according to the military itself. The US Army's "Law of Land Warfare," taught in basic training, says that US troops must always refuse an unlawful order—one that violates the Constitution or other US laws, is not reasonably linked to military necessity or is issued by someone without the proper authority.

Even passivity in the face of wrongdoing breaks military law. "If you are responsible for what's going on around you, and it is going unlawfully, and you know that [and] do nothing about it, I'm going to prosecute you," says Bill Eckhardt, a retired army colonel and professor at the University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Law who prosecuted most of the perpetrators of the My Lai massacre. "So basically, you've gotta be a whistleblower."

Congress never declared war against Iraq. As an unelected imposter, George W. Bush did not enjoy authority under the War Powers Act to commit American forces abroad. Concentration camps at Abu Ghraib and elsewhere violate the Geneva Conventions, which as treaty obligations are binding under U.S. law. Iraq did not threaten the United States. Iraq is not the subject of a U.N.-led international police action. Thus, by several measures, the war is illegal. Every order to deploy a soldier, aviator or sailor to fight in Iraq is by definition an unlawful order, one that he or she is legally and morally bound to refuse.

What are members of the military to do? They should certainly refuse to applaud when Bush uses them as backdrops to his logo-ridden pro-death pep rallies. Moreover, just as Muslim leaders were urged to speak out against Islamist extremists after 9/11, soldiers ought to step forward to condemn the atrocities at Bagram, Fallujah, and Guantánamo in letters to newspapers and other public venues.

The military used to be an honorable calling. Not under Bush. Ethical Americans considering a military career should instead seek a civilian job until a lawful, elected government has been restored in Washington and we have withdrawn our forces from occupied Afghanistan and Iraq. Those who are already enlisted should refuse to reenlist. Soldiers trapped by "stop loss" orders should apply for conscientious objector status (which is difficult to obtain) or refuse deployment, based on the unlawful order principle. And if all else fails, there's always desertion.

"They set up a roadblock with a sign in Arabic that says 'Stop or you'll be shot,'" 22-year-old Darrell Anderson told PBS' "NewsHour" about his seven-month tour of duty in Iraq. "This is a third world country. How many people can read? And I was in that situation: The family didn't stop, stopped in front of me. I was ordered to fire. I refused and said, 'The window's rolled down.' And I said, 'Look, there's children in the back.' There's a family. I did the right thing. They said, 'No you didn't. Next time you will open fire or you'll be punished.' Should I go to prison because I can't kill women and children?"

Anderson fled to Canada, which is considering extraditing him back to the United States. Even if he ends up in a military prison, Anderson will have made the correct choice. Rather than running around shouting that they "support the troops," opponents of the Iraq war ought to tell soldiers that fighting an illegal war is wrong. Rather than feeding their guilt for the supposed sins of the '60s antiwar movement by wallowing in phony jingoism, they ought to encourage members of the military to make the same difficult decision as the 5500 soldiers who have deserted or gone AWOL under Bush and the more than 250 who have applied for CO status.

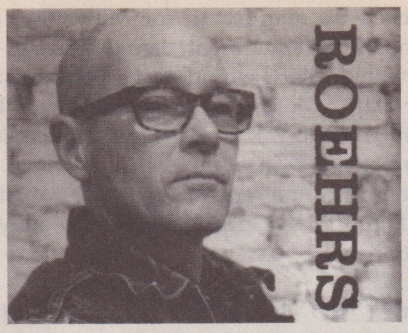
By the way, as Jerry Lembcke found in his book *The Spitting Image: Myth, Memory, and the Legacy of Vietnam*, there's no reason for antiwar types to feel guilty over the treatment of Vietnam vets—there's no evidence of any kind that anyone ever spat on a Vietnam veteran or called one a "baby killer." Those stories only began appearing after the 1982 release of "Rambo: First Blood:" "It wasn't my war—you asked me, I didn't ask you…and I did what I had to do to win," says Sylvester Stallone's character. "Then I came back to the world and I see all those maggots at the airport, protesting me, spitting on me, calling me a baby-killer." Pure fiction.

Chris Clarke (full disclosure: Clarke served as editor for a defunct publication that ran my cartoons) recalls a different reality: "In the 1960s and 70s, antiwar activists opened coffeehouses near military bases to provide soldiers with troubled consciences places to spend a few off-duty hours in like-minded company. We harbored deserters and AWOLs. We wrote letters to GIs, sent them care packages, grieved over them when they joined the damnable body counts announced on the Five O'Clock Follies."

OK, lefties? You can drop the "support the troops" shtick now.

Ted Rall, PO Box 1134, New York, NY 10027, chet@rall.com, www.rall.com

Current Books: *Wake Up, You're Liberal!: How We Can Take America Back From The Right* (Soft Skull, 336 pp., price $14.95), is out, available everywhere. *Generalissimo El Busho: Essays And Cartoons On The Bush Years* (NBM Publishing, 208 pp., $19.95 hardback/$15.95 paperback) is also out. The speaking tour is over but if you're at a high school or college with a budget for bringing in speakers, I'd be happy to come to your city.



Four Walls

Holy crap! There is fresh blood on the floor! Boss Tuneage Records from England has seen fit to issue an LP of HERESY material from 1985 to 1987. This shit reduces your brainstem to useless protoplasm! HERESY remains one of the most influential and criminally unrecognized thrash bands to have ever picked up guitars! This tastefully done gatefold LP presents material from a HERESY studio demo in 1985, the *Never Healed* flexi-EP from December of the same year, unreleased HERESY material from the Dortmund tape from 1987, and studio material from May of 1987 that was released as the *Thanks* EP. The songs included are "Never Healed," "Deprived," "Mentally Conned," "Blinded by Power," "Heresy" (instrumental), "Cries of Want," "Intro…/Disfigured World," "Never Healed," "Despair," "Deathbiter," "Anguish of War," "More Blood is Shed," "Dead," "Visions in Fear," "Path to Decadence," "Make the Connection," "Trapped in a Scene," "Network of Friends," and "Acceptance." Yes! One listen to the new HERESY LP *1985-1987* will remind you how important these thrashers are! Write to Boss Tuneage Records: PO Box 74, Sandy Bedfordshire, SG19 ZWB, UK, www.bosstuneage.com.

Fuckin' A! WOUND UP from Chicago, Illinois has a red hot seven-inch out on the Painkiller label! The songs on this scorching chunk of vinyl were recorded a year ago, and you punks and skins should be thankful that this shit is finally seeing the light of day.

WOUND UP begins with "How to Make Friends and Influence People." A real fucking skullkrusher! Turn this slab o' wax over and you get "Fuck Fashion" and "You're All Wrong" with the same high quality streetpunk underpinnings and a gruff, threatening vocal track on top. This is a good record to crossover the taste barrier and rope in both skinheads and punk rockers alike. Order your WOUND UP seven-inch EP from Painkiller Records, 8 Buerney St. #1, Boston, MA 02120, www.painkiller-records.com.

Hardcore Holocaust has a ripping new LP from Swedish hardcore hellions RAJOITUS. On this blazing hunk of brutal thrash you get 25 tracks of original hearing damage and a RATTUS cover to boot. These veteran headbangers take no prisoners on the new *Hat Morker Amfetamin* LP. This is brutal thrash start to finish with testosterone-fueled bombs raining down on you! "Hässlehomen Hardcore" spoken here! Order a copy of RAJOITUS' new long player from Hardcore Holocaust online at www.hardcoreholocaust.com.

OUTRAGED from Watsonville, California has a storming thrash split EP for you knuckleheads. The *Pure Vida* EP features POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT from Boston, MA on the flip playing high quality straight edge hardcore with no breakdowns and no bullshit!

OUTRAGED plays relentless thrash with desperate vocals, churning guitars, and an overwhelming drum attack! The lyrics are sung in Spanish and the singer has an urgency that will rip your ears off! You need to get this EP as soon as possible! Go see OUTRAGED when they play your town! Contact OUTRAGED, 345 East Beach Street, #E, Watsonville, CA 95076.

Those internationally renown skinheads from Germany, POBEL + GESOCKS have a CD prepared for you fucks! The new Sunny Bastards CD is called *Punk—Die Raritäten* and POBEL + GESOCKS provides fourteen excellent sing-a-long pub-punk skinhead anthems. These guys have been around so long that you can see the POBEL + GESOCKS influence on many younger European skinhead bands. At the end of this CD you get four bonus demo tracks from BECKS PISTOLS and 4-SPUR. This is good punk rock/skinhead product for you cretins! Order the new POBEL + GESOCKS Punk- Die Raritaten CD from www.sunny-bastards.de.

HARDSKIN from the UK came to the West Coast of the United States for a whirlwind tour and left a lot of smiling punks and skins!! Fat Bob, Johnny Takeaway, and Nipper managed to successfully bait the crowd at three venues in the Bay area in two days. All of the punk rock and skinhead sacred cows were thoroughly skewered!! The music was top notch!! Some of the supporting acts were: NUTS & BOLTS, THE VALS, LYME REGIS, BORN/DEAD, OIL, I LOVE MY LABEL, and GIANT HAYSTACKS.

NUTS & BOLTS from Oakland, California, played with HARDSKIN at 924 Gilman and debuted some excellent new songs that will soon become favorites for the skinheads that frequent the NUTS & BOLTS shows here in California. Skinheads that are lucky will get to see NUTS & BOLTS open two shows for the TEMPLARS on February 4 and February 5 at Eli's in Oakland, and Annie's, (The old Covered Wagon) in San Francisco.

Until next month, see you at the bar!

At Chicago O'Hare, the girls and I were picked up by a six-foot man with a two-foot beard. He had a concave midsection and a pair of laughing eyes. He was dressed in shorts, as it was summer, so that you could see bits of the many Willie Nelson tattoos. Covering his right hand was a skull inked in Tokyo by a punk rocker whose band, it was rumored, had ties to the yakuza.

Oh, Robert; what a sight for sore eyes. I leaped into his arms as Chloe and Clara plucked the guitars and the heavy, awkward drum hardware bag from the carousel.

Looking back on it, we were too soft and hesitant, there in the airport. Not because we were girls, but because we hadn't shaken off that fear, carried mostly in the shoulders, that is antithetical to the spirit of rock 'n' roll — which is all about sex and posture. Back then we were still moving like house-dwellers, like people who slept in beds.

Bands on tour become bound to one another because of the interconnectedness of their fates. It is a strain on all your faculties, but it also carries the promise of release and the potential for self-understanding.

Every summer, young men set out on the highways of various continents, armed with guitars and the urges of their age: to measure themselves against the other young men in the vans, who become their brothers. To make out with girls. And on stage, behind their instruments, to find that intimate balance between sharing and showing off. And, because they are usually men, the jokes, the smells and conquests—the long, unbroken conversation of tour—is inevitably textured by their maleness.

As for us, three women plus roadie, our conversation hadn't yet been recorded.

Chloe played the drums with natural drive and uncorrupted rhythm. But she had been practically born into the lap of the scene. Clara and I, as we looked back, realized that we had spent our early twenties behind the scenes, staying at home keeping our institutions intact while the packs of boys came and went. The sad truth was that nearly every guy we knew, no matter how mediocre a schmuck we knew him to be, could pick up a guitar with an easy mind, while we still approached our equipment with a complicated anxiety that we were angry at ourselves for feeling.

So this was, partly, something we had to prove. We had worked our asses off to write the songs—pounding them out in the middle of the night in the West Oakland warehouse where Clara and I picked and packed by day—recording the songs, making the tapes, and booking the tour. This would be new ground, but it was nice for Robert to be there, too.

On this trip, Robert was to be our Moses, or perhaps our Virgil, with a van and a public address system. He was here to lead us through the boiling wastelands of the heart—and of New Jersey. Because he had been there. He had toured the world, taking six-foot leaps nightly from the stacks, guitar in hand, before the screaming kids of Reykjavik and Santiago. And everywhere he hadn't been as a band member, he had been as a roadie—driving, driving, driving—which is what he had offered to do for us, for the fee of whatever we might have left in merch sales after this, our first East Coast tour.

***

The rhythm of half-sleep while the country tumbles by, out of the loft window; the childlike peace of the passenger lulled in the journey. The obnoxious habits of your bandmates that thicken and complete companionship, the bits of social anxiety abandoned at road stops, the stupid things you sing. And old friends you see in the towns, looking older and tired but still there, and the towns themselves, how much better it is to visit them like this, with something to do, to give what you have and then leave.

Chicago. Milwaukee. Madison. Two shows in one night. Ankle-deep in beer for the first one, as we watched the bands on tour from Puerto Rico pound out their songs in Spanish. We were exchanging tapes with their roadie when the promoter for a local bar came up and offered us the second show, for a quick sixty bucks.

Richmond. DC. Baltimore. Providence. Boston. Pittsburgh, PA.

Philadelphia, the Oaklandness of it, the murals and porches.

Upstate New York; a Ukrainian pool hall. After the opening band, we set up on the ground in front of the stage, not so much for a show of humility but to feed from the energy of the kids, most of whom had driven from Syracuse for the show. Robert stood by the bass amp with crossed arms, looking like a scary biker. Thwak! The bass neck flew up. The mike hit me in the teeth, and a kid reached out and pulled it right.

And then after the show, on to New York City, Robert telling stories as he drove. The road folding out in dark, elegant waves, and my heart reeling into it, pulled by the city and the person who lived there.

Tour, like war, is a way to leave your lover and return with stories they will never quite understand.

On stage, the way your instrument becomes an old, comfortable thing, like your wallet or your name, and the way you come together at last, in New York, the last night of tour, of course—and all the tension disappears from the faces of the people watching. They're just with you, loose in their limbs with you, shining with sweat like you are, sleek and easy in their muscles like some less neurotic sort of animal.

Late that night, after the show, my old flame and I walked for many New York miles, until we wore our arguments down past recognition. Finally, exhausted, I left him and climbed down into the bowels of the subway. I watched the rats commuting. I sobbed experimentally into the great hollow in my chest. Hope dripped from me like the heavy drops from the subway ceiling.

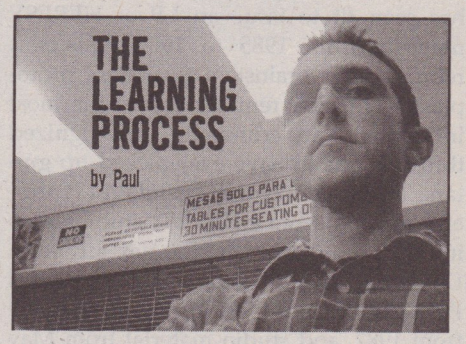
It was too old, too boring, this heartbreak. I was too old for it. I left it down there, in the sweltering subway, for the rats to gnaw away at.

Back to the apartment where we were staying, at three or four in the morning, it was too late to ring the bell. But I had only been in the hall for a minute when Clara opened the door, looking half-asleep and smashing. From the darkened living room, Robert's snore rolled out like the sound of an engine.

"Well, that's over," I said, tears rolling down my cheeks.

And tour was over. Time to go home. Early the next morning, we left Chloe in New York, so she could get settled before her first year at art school. The rest of us packed up and set off for Milwaukee to drop off the equipment, then to Chicago to fly home. Then I would start school, and as for Clara, who knows? It was the end of the band, probably. The end of the summer, for sure. Curled into the van's embrace, I aimed my regrets at the base of the Williamsburg Bridge and kissed goodbye, goodbye.

Arwen, PO Box 170291, SF, CA 94117, arwen@maximumrocknroll.com
We'll return next month to our regularly scheduled advice column.



Nihon e Yokoso!

Our first destination straight off the plane was a punk show in quiet neighborhood in northeastern Tokyo. We took the train from Narita airport to a seemingly obscure stop and followed the directions we'd been given, down this dark little street that ran parallel to the river. The first thing that struck us on our long, chilly walk was that none of the bikes we saw were locked up. Man, that's crazy, we thought aloud. Dozens of bikes just sitting around where anyone could steal them. But then you think, maybe it's crazy that we in the US have to lock every damn thing up with thick chains, deadbolts, and motion sensitive alarms... The second thing of note was there were beverage vending machines everywhere. I knew about Japan's plentitude of vending machines, but it was still surprising to see them on every single block in an area that seemed like it was way in the middle of nowhere. It was about time for some coffee anyway so, when in Rome...The can of coffee comes out of the machine hot! Hallelujah! I think Japan and us are gonna get along just fine.

We keep walking with our packs and bags for blocks and blocks (fortunately they're shorter blocks there) looking for a sign that says "HIGH TI," the name of the show space. Just when it seemed like we had walked too far and should turn back, we heard the sound of live music coming

from a building just off the street. But it wasn't punk rock, it just sounded like a jazz band rehearsing or a couple of guys jamming on a sax and drums. We weren't sure if we'd found the right place, and since we were brand new to the country we didn't know if it would be appropriate to just walk right in. So we stood around hemming and hawing, and chattering and shivering. A few minutes later, we saw a guy come out of the building and light a cigarette. We looked at the dude, then at each other. We'd been cramming, studying Japanese for weeks with phrasebooks and "Teach Yourself Japanese" CDs. The one phrase Ariel had down was "Nihon e yokoso!" which was very charming to hear her say, but utterly useless since it means, "Welcome to Japan!" So it was up to me to give it a shot…

"*Sumimasen,*" I say shyly to the stranger in a strange land.

He replies with something or other. It's always pretty easy to learn how to say stuff in another language. It's another thing altogether trying figure out what people are saying in response. And it's always nerve-racking trying to communicate in a foreign language, no matter how simple or mundane the conversation.

I take a deep breath. "*High Ti des ka*?"

He nods. *Boo ya!* Take that, Japanese!

He leads us through what looks like a small recycling center—either that or some weirdo junk collector lives there—up a funky staircase to the doorway with the "HIGH TI" sign. Success.

The space was tiny by American standards, but was the perfect size for this small crowd. It made a cozy and friendly atmosphere where we you couldn't help but socialize with the other people at the show. The folks who put on the show were cooking, and every few minutes they would hand a plate full of food to someone to pass around the crowd. And there was free beer, wine, and plum liqueur too. Magical!

Once we were inside, the drum 'n' sax duo (which was a band called Run) seemed a lot more punk, especially when we saw that the saxophonist was wearing a Discharge shirt and the drummer a DRI shirt. Dude was a shit-hot drummer, too. Two more jazzy/improv/punk bands played (Hununhum? Neons? Watabiki?), each sounding better and having an even hotter drummer than the last; and then there was the inexplicable noise/performance featuring a remote controlled box with sub-woofer inside that chased people around the warehouse. I remember wishing there was more crazy, fucked up shit like that at shows back home. We missed our friend Tetsunori's band, 2UP, because we had arrived too late but that didn't put a damper on things. We were so happy to have made it to Japan and ended up at a friendly, awesome show with free food and booze!

Eventually of course the excitement and the cans of hot coffee wore off, and the beer and jet lag began to take their toll. After trying my best to keep up with the raucous Ramones sing-along/dance party, I nodded off on the couch, only to be awoken who-know's-how-long later and moved to the bed our hosts had made for us out of six chairs (two facing rows of three) since the floor was much too filthy and cold to sleep on. What a bunch of sweethearts.

Turns out that guy we met outside was the first bassist of Total Fury! We also made new friends with Katoman (formerly of Fearless Vampire Killers) and Kitamura, the hot-shit drummer, who also played in the Tokyo Ramones! And we can't forget sweet Eri, who accompanied us to the Metro in the morning. We wish we could've hung out with you more. Thanks to everyone at High Ti for the warm *Nihon e yokoso!* (highti.jugem.jp)

Calling All the Punks!

I'm writing about this a month or two early so that people don't think it's an April Fool's joke: This May 25th all the punks are meeting in St. Louis, Missouri. Yes, *all* the punks. That means you! It's not a "fest" and it's not a protest. It's not for a cause and it's not for profit. No one is in charge; no one is "organizing" it. Do not ask too many questions, just go. I'm sure it will be awesome. Totally fucking awesome! Tell you friends, make plans, find a ride, or get a bus or plane ticket. All the punks! St. Louis 2006! May 25th! Meet under the arch! Stay punk and stay true.

Only a few hours ago, as Paul and I worked on putting the final touches on this issue of *Maximumrocknroll*, George Bush gave his state of the union address, his fifth as president of the United States. As in the speeches of the four past years, and despite the unyielding quagmire of war in Iraq, the crisis state of health care and education in this country, the still under-addressed condition of natural disaster stricken areas in the US, or the continued assault of poverty, disease, and warfare around the world, Bush proclaimed the state of the union to be "strong."

That is news to us here at *Maximum Rocknroll*. In fact, as far as I can tell, the state of the union is downright ugly, and even the Terveet Kadet record I'm listening to now doesn't have the power to drown out the relentless din of depression, addiction, and illness even those of us privileged enough to have our most basic needs met feel in these alienating and profit obsessed times.

On the other hand, Terveet Kadet…

*

Before I cut this one short to let you enjoy another month of punk rockery courtesy of the *Maximum Rocknroll* staff, I would like to encourage you to get in touch if you have ideas for interviews, collector scum pits, articles, scene reports, or anything else you think might fit in the pages of this here fanzine. I think that one of the best things about *MRR* is that it has often reflected the punk scene back to itself, since we get so many rad contributions from punks from all over the world. If you're not sure if what you have in mind is something we can use, the best way to find out is to drop us a line and ask. Oh, except for poetry. Please stop asking me about poetry.

*

Special thanks to Dan and everyone else at 924 Gilman for making the second record swap we've held in the past year a smash success. We're going to do another one, most likely in mid-summer; I'll give you more details once we have 'em.

*

One last thing—I finally got a mailing address of my own! And it only took me a year and half to get around to it. This means that all of those packages you've been holding onto for me can be mailed out. But seriously, write me a letter.

Golnar / PMB #241 / 530 Divisidero St/ San Francisco, CA 94117.

Or: golnar@maximumrocknroll.com

IT ALL STARTED BACK WHEN I HATED SAN JOSE & HAD TO GET THE FUCK OUT OF THERE - IT STARTED WHEN I WAS IN SANTA CRUZ & I MET MAD-T & RICK GRAVES & TRIED TO START A BAND WITH THEM BUT IT DIDNT WORK RIGHT AWAY SO I JOINED ANOTHER BAND CALLED THE CURBS FROM S.J. - I PLAYED GUITAR WITH THEM FOR A COUPLE YEARS BUT I STILL KEPT IN CONTACT WITH MAD-T & RICK - THEY BOTH MOVED TO NEW YORK - MOVED INTO SERENITY & STARTED THE DREGS & THEY ASKED ME TO JOIN - BASICALLY I CAME FOR 5 WEEKS & ENDED UP STAYING FOR 5 MONTHS & THATS HOW I STARTED SQUATTING - AFTER ABOUT A YEAR OF DOING WORK AT SERENITY I GOT VOTED IN - THAT WAS '96 - I'VE BEEN THERE EVER SINCE - THE DREGS DISBANDED IN 2000 & JIMMY FOUL FROM PUBLIC NUISANCE ASKED ME TO PLAY WITH VIRULENT STRAIN - I DID THAT FOR A FEW YEARS & THEN DEATH MOLD STARTED - AND I'M ALSO IN A BAND WITH BRIAN TRASH OF DISEASE-THAT BAND IS CALLED WOUND - I ALSO RUN A RECORDING STUDIO CALLED RAW ASS RECORDINGS THAT I BUILT AT SERENITY - RECENTLY I RECORDED JOHN DENVER'S AIRPLANE & RABIA - MUSIC IS ALL I CARE ABOUT SO THATS WHAT I STICK TO - DEATH MOLD WILL BE GOING TO MEXICO IN FEBUARY - OH I FORGOT TO MENTION I ALSO PLAY BASS FOR PIGSHIT ENGINE WHICH IS AN ALL SQUATTER BAND & I ALSO PLAY BASS IN A BAND CALLED GOITER WITH ENOK FROM PIGSHIT ENGINE - GOITER IS GRINDCORE - I SHOULD MENTION RECEPTACLE RECORDS WHICH I STARTED WITH MAD-T - WE STILL HAVE TOO MANY DREGS RECORDS & SPIDER CUNTS & PUBLIC NUISANCE CD'S BUT WE DON'T HAVE A WEBSITE - COMPUTER FREE SINCE '97 !!! SUNDAY AUG. 6 2006 IS THE SQUATTER RIOT REUNION SHOW AT TOMPKINS SQ PARK - FREE & ALL AGES

Mike Dreg 07/01/2K6 Lower East Side NYC

I met Mike in the mid '90s when he showed up & started playing in the Dregs, which was a very popular NYC Squatter band – one of my favorites! – Mike has also set up lots of shows at places like C Squat & Dos Blocos & Tompkins Square Park – he also does a lot of recording with some awesome local bands – Mike's current band Death Mold is really amazing – the vocals will knock you out – unfortunately Mike does not do email but you can write to him at PO Box 20259 Tompkins Square Station NYC NY 10009 (like he says he has lots of old Dregs & Spider Cunts records left & Public Nuisance CDs!) – if you want to email the rest of the band you can do it through DEATHMOLD666@yahoo.com to contact Fly email fly@bway.net (put MRR in the subject so I know its not spam) – PEOPs #3 zine is now available for $5 (US) post paid - write to Fly PO Box 1318 Cooper Stn NYC NY10276 USA

MRR NEWS

MRR NEWS FOR ISSUE #274 COMPILED BY ARIEL CELESTE

VANQUISHING THE AMERICAN DREAM

By Jim Hightower, Hightower Lowdown. Alternet.net

As General Motors shuts down well-paid middle-class jobs, the old slogan 'What's good for G.M. is good for America' no longer applies

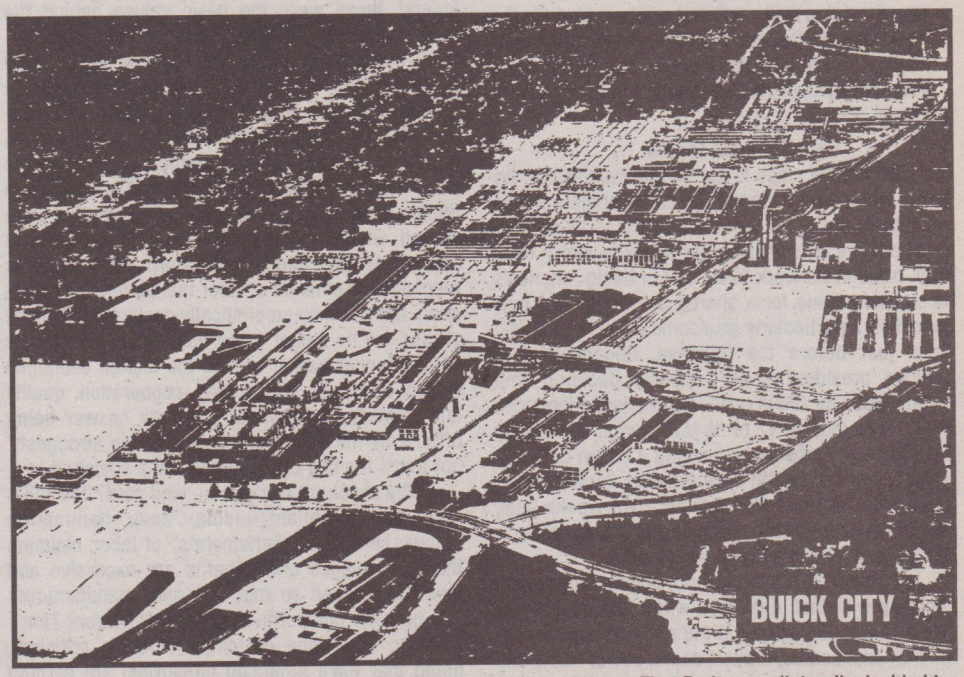
People like Robert Paulk and Jerry Roy are the heart of corporations like General Motors. Paulk, 58, and Roy, 49, are longtime, highly skilled hourly employees who've been working-class proud of being part of GM. Over the years, they've known their share of the hard labor, heavy lifting, and stress that come with being an autoworker, but they've stayed loyal, taken great pride in their work, and kept increasing their skills and productivity, doing their part to help General Motors become the largest car seller in the world — and helping GM's investors pocket years of profits.

The job has been good to Paulk and Roy, too. Under the contracts negotiated by the United Auto Workers, Paulk, his wife, and their two teenagers have been able to enjoy a slice of middle-class comfort. Likewise, Roy, a third-generation GM worker, has done well enough to afford a modest but pleasant house on a lake near Flint, Mich., where his job is.

The Paulks and Roys represent a common story that can be told by millions of Americans of their generation. It's the story of our country's "social contract" — an implicit agreement between working stiffs like them and corporations like GM. This is a remarkable success story, embodying our nation's egalitarian ideals and our commitment to the common good. In practice, America's historic social contract has established within our huge, diverse and fragile society something essential: a stable middle class. While the Constitution and Bill of Rights are the legal glue of our nation, this contract is the social glue — it binds us as one people, giving tangible evidence that "we're all in this together." Those who produced this democratic advance were not the founders back in 1776, but our parents and grandparents — and doing so did not come easily for them.

In the 1920s and '30s, working families in industry after industry openly rebelled against the rampant corporate greed, workplace abuses and political corruption of the day. As they organized, marched, and held sit-ins and strikes, they were bludgeoned, shot and often killed by corporate bosses, Pinkerton goons, police and even the National Guard. It was a hellacious period of bloody labor war, deep social unrest and spreading political upheaval. Finally, fearing for the very survival of capitalism, corporate chieftains began to signal to union leaders that they were ready to negotiate for labor peace and a new social order.

The ensuing bargain was straightforward: Corporations would get labor, loyalty and productivity in exchange for assuring job and retirement



security. From the New Deal until the mid-1980s, unions, corporations and government hammered out a series of explicit agreements, rules and laws that gave legal structure to this implicit contract. The result was a new balance of power that made ordinary people like autoworkers the first decently paid, decently treated working class in the world.

Work was still hard and demanding, but the development of our social contract meant that, for the first time, tens of millions could find the American dream within their reach. By no means would you be a millionaire, but you could buy a modest home, have health care for your family, take a vacation and not have to fear retirement — in other words, have the work ethic fairly rewarded. Such a contract also enabled working folks like Paulk and Roy to feel positive about America's commitment to the common good, to pride themselves as being a valued part of the economy and the larger community, and to have hope for the next generation. Such feelings are more than touchy-feely niceties — they determine whether people support the social order. This is why the feelings of workaday folks like Paulk and Roy are a crucial baromenter of America's well-being, and why today's corporate and political elite had better begin tuning in to them. "We're all worried. Everybody is worried," Paulk says of GM's workers. "There are a lot of people that are really mad. They think this is the thing that revolutions are made of."

The thing

What has the majority of America's working families worried, angry and in a mood to revolt is that the Powers That Be have unilaterally decided to walk away from the social contract, and in so doing, to kiss off our country's middle class. The evidence of their abandonment is everywhere:

- Cut-backs, take-backs and downsizings have become routine corporate practice, even in a time of soaring corporate profits.
- Wages have been deliberately depressed (now not even keeping up with inflation), while workers have dramatically increased the productivity, profitability and competitiveness of their corporations.
- While CEOs slash wages, cut health care and eliminate pensions for workers, they wallow in extravagant pay packages for themselves, get Cadillac health coverage for life and grab rich pensions they haven't earned.
- Not only are most manufacturing corporations shifting their investments and middle-class jobs offshore (mostly to China), but the high-tech industry is also abandoning the American middle class, shifting even its professional work to low-paid countries (mostly to India).
- Corporate money has bought the White House and Congress (including too many moneysoaked Democrats), so Washington has been aggressively dismantling the framework of rules and laws that allowed labor to achieve some fairness in the workplace.
- The courts and regulatory agencies have been stacked with former corporate minions who are consistently ruling against worker rights and protections.

- Wall Street's powerhouse investors are now demanding that every corporation and the overall American economy be organized on the low-wage, no-benefit, antiunion model of Wal-Mart.
- The media establishment (itself corporate) has obligingly adopted the corporate spin that the day of unionism is long gone, that workers must learn to accept insecurity and a lowered lifestyle, that the social contract is simply too much of a burden on corporations and governments in this age of global competitiveness, and that, for success, tomorrow's workers "must take on the responsibility" to identify and acquire — "on their own" — "the emerging skill sets" that will be "valued in the marketplace" (believe it or not, this glob of gobbledygook actually came out of the mouth of an IBM executive, quoted approvingly in the New York Times).

What's good for GM ...

The middle class is not simply "vanishing" (as some well-paid scribes of the establishment media so blithely put it) — the middle class is being vanquished! The auto industry, for example, which once took pride in its work force and in being America's economic engine for a shared prosperity, has now launched a particularly gruesome assault. Late last year, just before the holidays, General Motors (whose president once famously declared that what's good for GM is good for America) announced that it was closing 12 of its U.S. plants, eliminating 30,000 hourly jobs and whacking a billion dollars a year out of the health-care benefits it owes to its blue-collar workers and retirees. Two weeks later, GM announced that it was going to triple the number of cars it makes in low-wage India.

At about the same time, Delphi Corporation went even further. A division within GM until it was spun off in 1999, Delphi is the nation's largest supplier of dashboards, brakes, doors, power trains and other components assembled by auto companies, hauling in more than $28 billion a year in sales. It announced last October that it plans to close some of its 31 U.S. plants, terminate its health-care plan and life-insurance coverage for blue-collar retirees, reduce pension payments, and — get this — force its 34,000 hourly workers to take a two-thirds cut in their wages. Skilled workers there, who make as high as $30 an hour, would be knocked down to as low as $10 an hour. Asserting that the middle-class wages and benefits earned by autoworkers are unaffordable luxuries these days, millionaire executives have begun the Wal-Martization of automaking. This is not just another industry, and the severing of the social contract by GM and Delphi is not just another in a long string of corporate downsizings. This is one of our nation's premier industries, a symbol of America's economic vitality and can-do spirit and a pacesetter for our entire economy.

In 1914, only a year after he opened his first assembly line, Henry Ford stunned the manufacturing world by more than doubling the hourly wage of workers on the line. At $5 a day, he explained, they could afford to buy a Ford. Moreover, James Couzens, Ford's corporate treasurer at the time and the man credited with the $5-a-day idea, said: "We want those who have helped us to produce this great institution and are helping to maintain it to share our prosperity."

Ninety-one years later, the managerial heirs to Ford and Couzens are disowning any corporate commitment to shared prosperity as they arbitrarily abrogate the good-faith contracts negotiated with autoworkers. Today's industry executives are cutting off the top rungs of America's middle-class ladder, lowering the best-paid jobs to a level where employees will no longer have the income to buy the products they make.

In the name of "competitiveness" with third-world countries, these executives are creating a poorer, less secure — and angry — working class in our country, stealing the American Dream from millions of people. Their actions raise a number of Big Questions for the future of our society:

Around what shall we gather? Learned from early childhood, the importance of fairness and sharing is central to our becoming social beings. Indeed, these were the basic values behind the social contract, which pledged that loyalty, productivity, cooperation and quality work would be fairly rewarded. But these values are nowhere in sight when GM dumps 30,000 loyal workers whose productivity record, according to the very CEO who did the dumping, "has been dramatic," doubling in the past 10 years. These values are also absent when GM shuts down 12 facilities, including two that were ranked among the industry's best in quality and another at GM's Tennessee Saturn plant that was renowned as a model of labor-management cooperation. GM has now emphatically declared that those virtues are no longer to be honored. If our society can no longer gather around the shared economic values of loyalty, productivity, cooperation, quality and fairness, then what? The only answer being offered by the elites is "survival of the strongest," but that's the law of the jungle, not a social ethic.

Why shouldn't workers be well paid? The CEOs (and the compliant media) keep hammering autoworkers as the "aristocrats" of labor, claiming that their wages and benefits are excessive and must be slashed so that U.S. auto manufacturers can become competitive again. A New York Times reporter, in a tone of tongue-clucking criticism, noted that GM's American employees are earning far more than autoworkers "in countries like Mexico and China." Well, gosh — I would hope so! Isn't getting ahead part of the American ethic? What's wrong with a blue-collar factory worker making $30,000 or even $60,000 a year, plus health care and a good pension? That's success — for the workers and for America — and it ought to be held up as a model for a well-run economy, not a target of derision. Oh, by the way, how ludicrous is it for the pay of middle-class workers to be attacked by CEOs hauling away millions of dollars each and living in platinum cocoons?

What about the abject failures in the executive suite? Top management has become highly creative at blaming, reducing and stealing from its work force. If management put a tenth of that creativity into designing cars that the buying public might actually want, there would be no need for the massive cutbacks we're getting. Contrast Detroit's performance with the competition. Toyota, for example, makes cars here in America, paying wages and benefits comparable to Detroit's. But its high-quality, good-mileage, reliable cars are selling — American consumers are snapping up Toyotas faster than the company can roll them out. Far from cutting back, Toyota and other foreign competitors are opening new plants in America, while the geniuses running GM are trying to shrink their way to prosperity. U.S. auto chieftains do not keep up with market demands or design quality cars. Instead, they run top-heavy corporate structures, engage in fraud (much of Delphi's present financial troubles come from its three-year, Enron-like accounting scandal that cost investors more than $1 billion), launch new "turnaround" schemes every few months, rely on money-losing discounts to move inventory and dump money into silly advertising campaigns to try to cover up their production failures. Then, with revenues down, they demand more cutbacks for the blue-collar workers while merrily giving everyone in the executive suite promotions and raises.

Doesn't this cry out for a national health-care program? A constant refrain from the auto companies is that the soaring cost of health care is crushing their bottom line. For example, GM honchos wail loudly that covering their autoworkers and retirees adds $1,500 to the cost of each car. The only answer, they say, is to slash or even eliminate this protection for working families. But wait — before our country callously agrees to yank the health-care rug out from under the middle class, let's consider fundamentally reforming our bloated, bureaucratic, exorbitantly expensive, inadequate and unjust health-care system. Again, check the competition: Japan has a national health program that doesn't leave its population dependent on whether an employer wants to or can afford to cover employees. No matter what their job is (or if they don't have a job), the Japanese people have the security of health coverage. Thus Toyota's workers enjoy health care without the cost being added to the price of the cars they make.

With a national health program for America, not only would GM improve its competitiveness by some $1,500 per car, but our nation would also be made stronger by replacing the inefficiencies and greed of the massive corporate structure (insurance giants, HMOs, drug peddlers, etc.) separating us patients from our doctors. America spends far more per person on health care than do Japan and other countries with a national plan — and they get superior care. It's time for the auto bosses to show leadership. Rather than retreating on the social contract, they should use their political and media clout to advance a national health-care program that'll truly be good for the country — and for General Motors.Delhi court ban on errant monkeys

A dangerous betrayal

Today's corporate leadership is playing with fire. The elites are so focused on enriching themselves — knocking down the workaday majority's wages and benefits in order to grab more of the nation's wealth, for example, and getting Bush to keep piling on the tax giveaways for the rich at the expense of everyone else — that they have become blind to the looming threat that their avarice poses to the social order and to their own well-being. Until recently, the Wal-Mart model has been taking advantage of low-skilled, low-income workers, but moving that model upward to autos, steel, high-tech, and other industries ensnares highly skilled middle-income workers. There's a big difference between holding people down and knocking them down. Middle-class working families are people who've had a slice of the American pie — and for them to be told now that their slice will be taken from them and their children is not merely to shred the social contract and throw it in their faces, but to dissolve the social glue that holds our big, sprawling, brawling country together. It's the betrayal of the middle class. And, as Robert Paulk put it, "This is the thing that revolutions are made of." The elites who are so smugly dismissing middle-class wages and benefits as "excessive" will not be able to build walls and gates high enough to stem the tide of anger coming at them.

INSURGENTS TERRORIZE INDIAN CAPITAL

BBC

Monkeys have become a major nuisance in Delhi

The High Court in the Indian capital, Delhi, has directed the city's civic authorities to rid the premises of a top court of marauding monkeys.

The court told the authority to catch monkeys who were disrupting work at the Tis Hazari courts within a month.

A petitioner complained that the monkeys were attacking lawyers and their clients and snatching their food.

Delhi suffers from a serious monkey menace, with scores of animals seen across the city.

The monkeys are mostly seen around top government offices.

Petitioner Nirmal Chopra said lawyers at Tis Hazari had asked the state government and the municipality to tackle the simians, but no action had been taken.

Tis Hazari is Asia's largest law complex with 162 courts.

"If you cannot catch monkeys, then better close down your institution," Judges Vijender Jain and Rekha Sharma told the municipality.

The Press Trust of India quoted the municipality's lawyer as saying that catching monkeys was no longer its responsibility.

He told the court that a monkey catcher hired by the municipality had required 72 stitches after being mauled during an operation. Other monkey catchers were reluctant to take up the work.

Security threat

Delhi's monkeys have gained a notorious reputation for invading homes, schools and government offices.

The monkeys who have moved into residential areas and official enclaves due to Delhi's shrinking forests, are said to have become a security threat.

Two years ago, the ministry of defence found some of its top secret documents scattered all over the place one morning.

It was blamed on the many rhesus monkeys which flock around the colonial-era building.

The prime minister's office, which is situated in the same block, is also within reach.

A cabinet minister could not enter his official bungalow for months because the monkeys would not let anybody enter the house.

The presidential palace, too, has been targeted and staff there have been forced to employ a dark-faced langur monkey to scare away the rhesus monkeys.

Last year the Delhi administration began a drive to catch the errant monkeys. Some 500 of them were captured and are kept on the outskirts of Delhi.

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DEAR ABBY

DEAR ABBY: I am an armed forces veteran who spent a tour of duty in Iraq in 2004. My wife and I separated three years ago, and she and our four children now reside in another state. Neither of us has "moved on," and we may reconcile later in life.

I am writing about my oldest son, "Jon," who is 18 and not yet out of high school due to poor grades. He and I do not have a good relationship and have very different views regarding life and politics. Jon was, and still is, bitter over his mother and me separating.

When I returned from Iraq on mid-tour leave, I gave him the uniform jacket I wore in combat with all the rank, flags, name tags, etc., on it as a gift. I know from my own youth that I would have been proud to have had something from my uncles or father that they wore during the war. Jon started wearing it as soon as I gave it to him, and I was proud of him to do so.

I have not seen him much since my return to the United States from the war. However, I did see him a little over a month ago and noticed that he's still wearing the jacket. My wife says he wears it often. He has written an anarchy symbol in permanent marker on the American flag on the right sleeve under my combat patch. I am angry and disappointed, but I didn't make waves. I am not sure how to handle this, and I'm afraid that a returning soldier may take one look and vent his problems from combat tour of duty on my son.

American vet in Alabama

DEAR AMERICAN VET: Your son may have defaced the jacket to punish you for the separation, or as a political statement. We live in a country that guarantees freedom of speech. Ask him if he realizes the effect that the anarchy symbol he penned on the American flag may have on other vets (including you). If the answer is yes, then he may have to learn the hard way what can happen when someone does something that's deliberately inflammatory.

MORE PROOF THAT GLOBAL CAPITALISM WILL RUIN EVERYTHING YOU ENJOY...

Reuters
AMSTERDAM–

Marijuana growers gathered in Europe's pot-smoking capital Sunday for a trade show that is taking on the trappings of a major industry fair, complete with scantily clad models, glossy brochures and, of course, samples. But instead of posing next to muscle cars, the models explained the intricacies of hydroponics culture such as the "iGrowbox Intensive Irrigation System" and exhibitors showed off their bongs, grinders, rolling paper, reflective film, hemp-fabric apparel and how-to marijuana growing videos.

"This gives you an uplifting high, up in the mind, not in your body," marijuana cultivator Arjan Roskam said of his latest Cannabis Cup-winning strain, "Arjan's Haze #1."

Roskam, who says he has hosted celebrities such as 50 Cent and Eminem in his Amsterdam coffee shops, was selling his prize-winning plant seeds for 100 euros ($121) alongside other strains such as the "Great White Shark" and "Hawaiian Snow."

Andre Beckers, the organiser of the International Highlife Hemp Fair, said he was expecting 15,000 to 20,000 visitors at the fair, held for the first time in Amsterdam instead of Utrecht, a smaller Dutch city to the southeast of the capital.

"This is part of the normalization process," Beckers said. "People see this as a normal fair."

While Dutch "coffee shops" are allowed to sell small quantities of marijuana, growing and distribution of cannabis remain illegal in the Netherlands. Police were at the fair but did not appear to be taking action against the growers.

EEEEEEW...

Reuters
TOKYO–

A Japanese nurse who tried to relieve her work stress by tearing off patients' nails was sentenced Monday to three years and eight months in prison.

The 32-year-old Japanese woman, who worked at a hospital in the ancient capital of Kyoto, tore off the fingernails and toenails of six female patients in September and October 2004. The patients were all immobile after strokes or other illnesses.

The Kyoto District Court said the woman had committed the cruel acts to relieve stress she was under from extra work forced on her by her supervisors.

DUCT TAPE SAVES THE DAY (AGAIN)

www.rpi-polymath.com

With the proliferation of RFID devices and related privacy concerns, it seemed due time to create the RFID Blocking Duct Tape Wallet. There are many ways to prevent Radio Frequency ID tags from being transmitted from devices. I often use my work badge and school ID which both contain RFID tags. With drivers licenses, credit cards, and cash now beginning to contain RFID tags, why not create a protective wallet.

RFID chips now exist in many of the bank cards and various forms of ID we carry in our wallet's everyday.

There are two materials which disseminate Radio Signals with incredible success... Water & Metal. Although you could fill a bag full of water and place your money, wallet, or whatever else in it, let's continue with the metal route. A single layer of aluminum foil of only 27 microns thick is often enough to block the RFID signals of most readers or 1mm of dilute salt water. A quick test at my work place using my badge confirmed the effectiveness of a layer of aluminum foil. (insert obligatory aluminum foil hat joke)

So... the next step was to design a wallet with aluminum foil embedded inside. Using classic plans to make Duct Tape Wallets, it is simple to modify them to include the aluminum foil.

If your simply looking for a bit of casual protection, simply stacking your cards next to each other will assist in reducing their strength.

In creating a RFID Blocking Duct Tape Wallet, the only step that needs to be modified is the first one. To create a sheet of RFID Blocking tape, simply place a sheet of foil on the table, and place strips of Duct Tape overlapping on top. Once created, the sheet can be cut with scissors to the sizes needed to continue making the wallet.

I chose to make one more addition to my RFID Protective Wallet. A simple flap on the left hand side prevents cards inside the wallet from broadcasting even while the wallet is open half way. If there are cards you wish to broadcast at will, consider creating a pocket of only tape on the outside of the wallet for you to slip the card into.

FROZEN ASSETS

By Antonio Regalado
The Wall Street Journal

You can't take it with you. So Arizona resort operator David Pizer has a plan to come back and get it.

Like some 1,000 other members of the "cryonics" movement, Mr. Pizer has made arrangements to have his body frozen in liquid nitrogen as soon as possible after he dies. In this way, Mr. Pizer, a heavyset, philosophical man who is 64 years old, hopes to be revived sometime in the future when medicine has advanced far beyond where it stands today.

And because Mr. Pizer doesn't wish to return a pauper, he's taken an additional step: He's left his money to himself.

With the help of an estate planner, Mr. Pizer has created legal arrangements for a financial trust that will manage his roughly $10 million in land and stock holdings until he is re-animated. Mr. Pizer says that with his money earning interest while he is frozen, he could wake up in 100 years the "richest man in the world."

Though cryonic suspension of human remains is still dismissed by most medical experts as an outlandish idea, Mr. Pizer is not alone in hoping to hold onto his wealth into the frosty hereafter.

"I figure I have a better than even chance of coming back," says Don Laughlin, the 75-year-old founder of an eponymous casino and resort in Laughlin, Nev. Mr. Laughlin, who turned a down-and-out motel he bought in 1966 into a gambling fortune, plans to leave himself $5 million.

At least a dozen wealthy American and foreign businessmen are testing unfamiliar legal territory by creating so-called personal revival trusts designed to allow them to reclaim their riches hundreds, or even thousands, of years into the future.

Such financial arrangements, which tie up money that might otherwise go to heirs or charities, are "more widespread than I originally thought," says A. Christopher Sega, an adjunct professor of law at Georgetown University and a trusts and estates attorney at Venable LLP, in Washington. Mr. Sega says he's created three revival trusts in the last year.

In December, a trusts expert from Wachovia Trust Co., part of Wachovia Corp., participated in the First Annual Colloquium on the Law of Transhuman Persons held in Florida. His PowerPoint presentation was titled "Issues Facing Trustees of Personal Revival Trusts." A Wachovia spokesman confirmed the bank is named as trustee in one cryonics case but declined to comment further for this article.

To serve clients who plan on being frozen, attorneys are tweaking so-called dynasty trusts that can legally endure hundreds of years, or even indefinitely. Such trusts, once widely prohibited, are now allowed by more than 20 states — including Arizona, Illinois and New Jersey — and typically are used to shield assets from estate taxes. They pay out funds to a person's children, grandchildren and future generations.

The chilling new twist: In addition to heirs or charities, estate lawyers are also naming their cryonics clients as beneficiaries. If they come back to life after being frozen, the funds revert back to them. Assuming, that is, that there are no legal challenges to the plans.

Thomas Katz, an estate planner at the law firm Ruden McClosky in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., believes cryonics could raise fundamental legal quandaries. Upon coming back to life, for instance, would a person have to repay their life insurance? "Our legal notion of death is pretty fixed. The scientific notion might not be as time goes by," Mr. Katz says.

Christopher Gloe, a senior attorney with the Marshall & Ilsley Trust Co. in Milwaukee, says his organization rejected an offer to invest money in a cryonics case after the question went before the bank's management committee several years ago. "We turned it down because we are a conservative Midwestern trust company, and not likely to get involved in an unproven entity such as a cryonics trust," said Mr. Gloe.

Some 142 human bodies or heads, including that of baseball legend Ted Williams, are now held in cold-storage at one of two U.S. cryonics facilities, Alcor Life Extension Foundation in Scottsdale Ariz., and the Cryonics Institute of Clinton Township, Mich.

People interested in cryonics are mostly male, frequently single, and typically have a strong interest in technology and predicting future events. And yet it's hard to know just how wide-spread the phenomenon of personal revival trusts is, since some wealthy individuals may fear ridicule if their hopes for immortality became known. Like in the tale of Dr. Frankenstein's monster, "the image of local farmers climbing the mountain with pitchforks and torches is still in people's minds," says Kenneth Weiss, 63, co-founder of RSA Security, which markets SecurID computer-user-authentication cards.

Mr. Weiss, who retired in 1996 with RSA stock valued in the tens of millions of dollars, says he plans to be cryopreserved and is now working with a Swiss bank to stash money off shore. Mr. Weiss says he knows several "billionaires" with similar plans but declines to name them. "People who are really taking this thing seriously have no need for notoriety," he says.

The cryonics-trust phenomenon dates back at least to 1989, with the formation by two American entrepreneurs of the Reanimation Foundation, a trust based in Liechtenstein, the tiny European principality known for its liberal tax rules. It offers memberships to people willing to put in as little as $25,000, say clients. According to a promotional flier, which asks "How Rich Will You Be?," a $10,000 investment could grow to $8,677,163 in 100 years. "You'll be able to buy youth and perfect health for centuries," says the pitch.

One successful businessman planning for the future is Robert Miller, the owner of Future Electronics Inc., a wholesale electronics distributor based in Montreal. Mr. Miller, whose net worth is $4 billion, according to the company, declined to be interviewed.

However, Pierre Guilbault, Future's chief financial officer and executive vice president, confirmed that Mr. Miller "does not want to pass away" and has plans to put a "substantial" sum away for himself in a trust for when he is cryopreserved. Mr. Miller gives generously to charity and other causes, but Mr. Guilbault says "the question is who earned the money. You earned it, and it's yours."

No one knows just what future technology may bring, or what form a new existence could take. Mr. Laughlin confronted that issue in a meeting last August with his lawyers while drafting a trust. Mr. Laughlin opted against allowing a mere biological clone to get his money. He insisted whoever gets the funds should have "my memories."

"We can't anticipate the science of the future, so we need some definition that will be flexible and stand the test of time," says Scott Swain, Mr. Laughlin's tax attorney.

Since people like Mr. Laughlin may rest in icy slumber for hundreds of years, protecting their assets from the living is apt to be a key challenge. After all, even the most standard of trusts have long been susceptible to dishonest managers — not to mention challenges from disgruntled heirs.

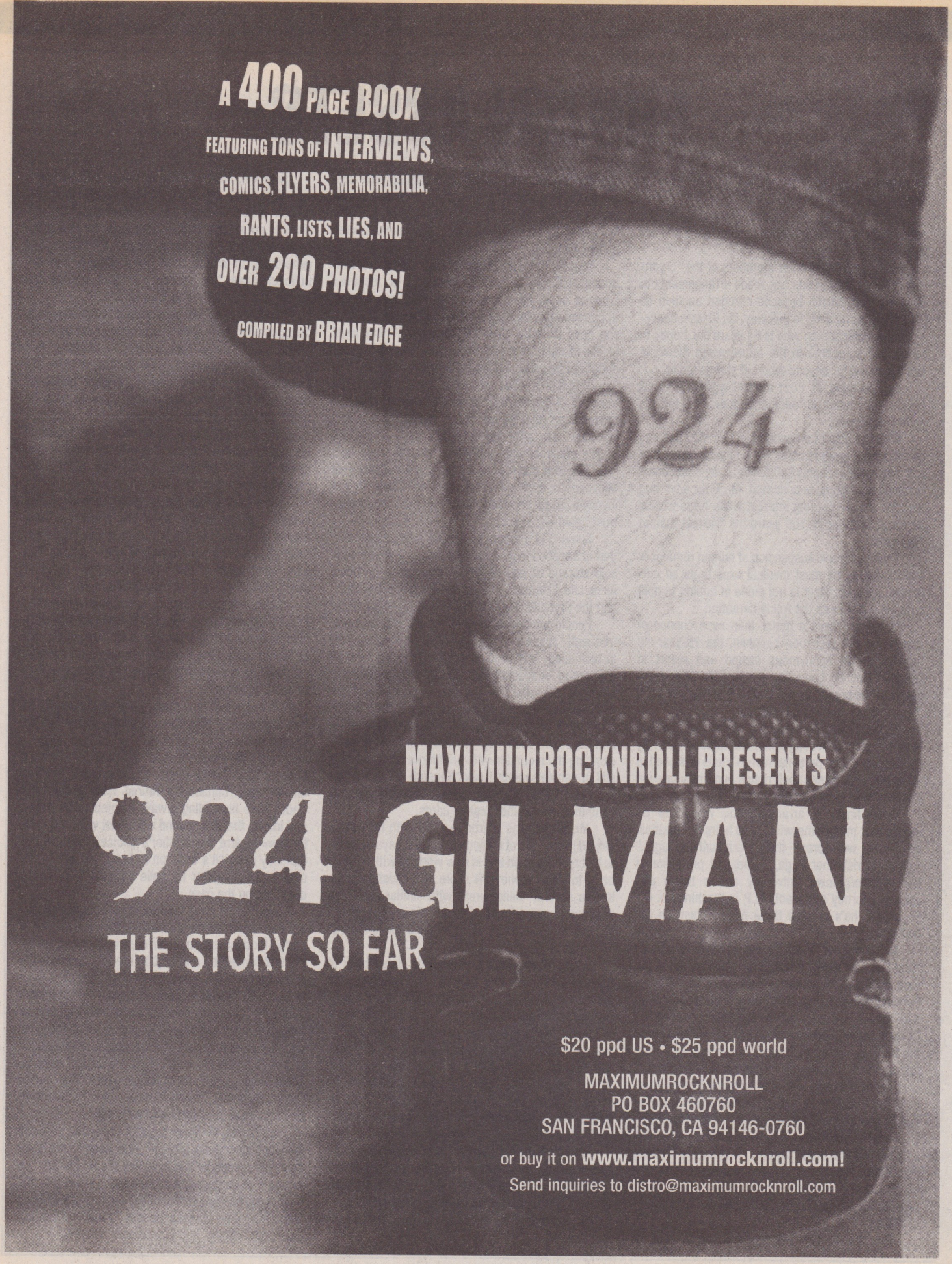
When Jakob P. Canaday, a Florida investor, died in 2004 of throat cancer, he left behind plans to stash his millions in a long-lasting trust with directions that he would recoup the money if and when his "human remains are revived and restored to life," according to court documents.

On the eve of Mr. Canaday's death, however, his two daughters produced a new will, which left his fortune to them.

Now there's a lawsuit pending in Broward County, Fla., Circuit Court. Mr. Canaday's brother, Siesel "Bud" Canaday, a retired Wall Street bond trader, says his sibling always wanted to be frozen and insists that the second will is not valid. No matter how bizarre his brother's choices may be, Mr. Canaday says, "it's tradition to honor the will of the deceased." Daughter Michelle Canaday declined to comment on the case.

Despite the uncertainties, cryonauts are choosing their investments carefully. Edward O. Thorp, a hedge-fund industry pioneer, created a cryonics trust in 1997 funded by a $200,000 life-insurance policy. At 73, he says he's now arranging a larger trust — of between $1 million and $50 million — which he will direct to invest in no-load index-tracking mutual funds to avoid management and trading fees. He puts the odds of a person frozen today coming back at 2%. "I figure it's worth a lottery ticket," says Dr. Thorp, who has a Ph.D. in mathematics. The Orange County Business Journal estimated his net worth to be more than $100 million to $300 million.

In Arizona, Mr. Pizer says he hopes his wife will join him in cryonic storage. And even if his trust money is somehow lost or stolen during his time on ice, he'll be content just as long as he returns to life. If he does, he says he'd use the opportunity to work hard and create new businesses. "I made it the first time from nothing, and I could do it again."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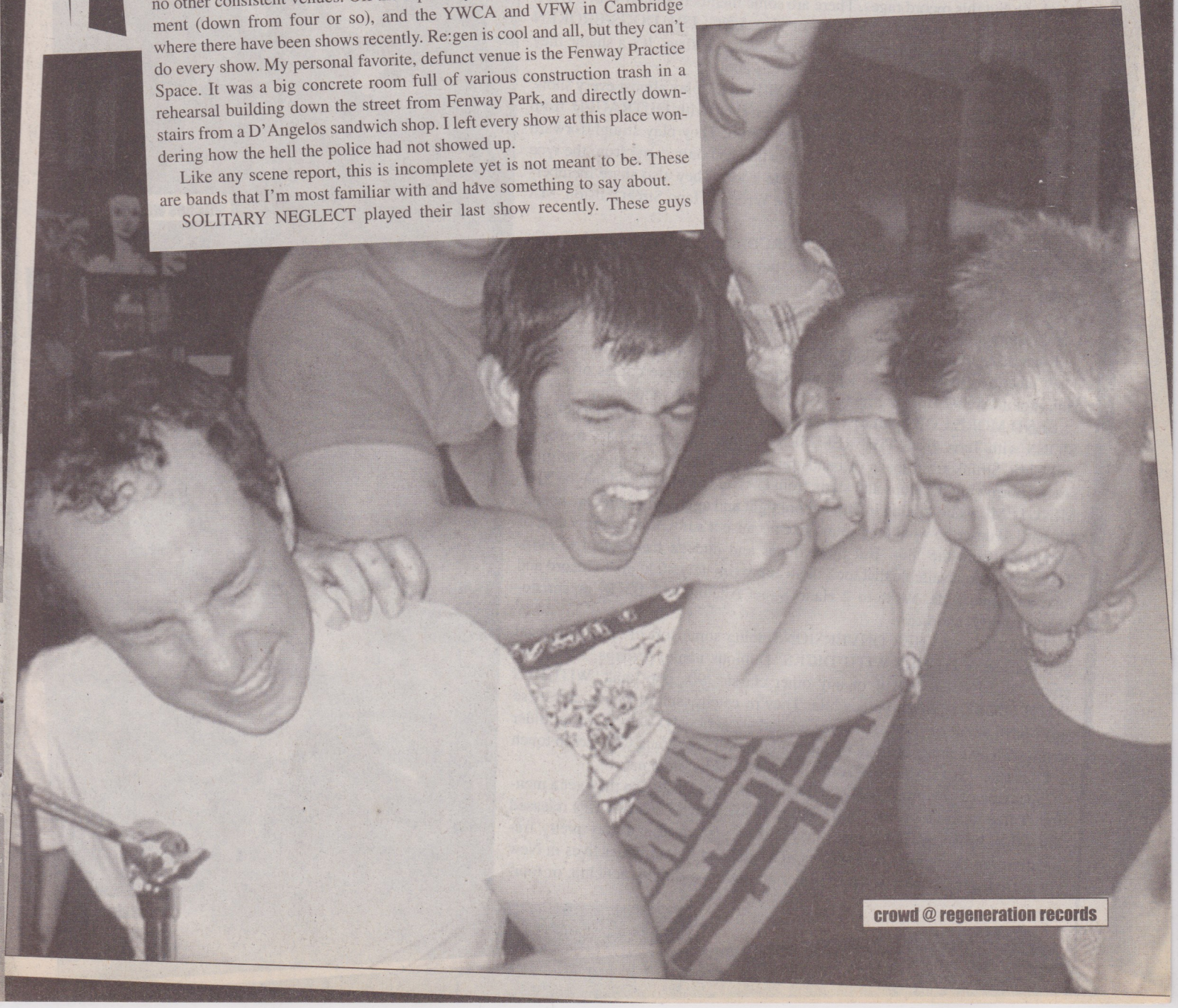
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Hey, what's up? Here's a Boston scene report for you. While it's pretty much the standard for reviewers to bitch and moan about how lame their local scene is, I believe mine is doing pretty well these days. Probably the best thing to happen recently is the opening of Re:generation Records in Allston. Their first attempt at a show space in Roxbury lasted about five shows or so until violations of various codes got them busted. A of couple years later they reopened as a record store/tattoo shop with a permit for *in store appearances*. It's a good size (face it, the original space was way too big) and everything has been going great for over a year — good touring bands, good turnouts, and good reactions. And it's not run like a collective, so there are none of the power struggles or apathy that sometimes plague punk venues. The only complaint now is that other than Re:gen there are no other consistent venues. Off the top of my head I can think of one basement (down from four or so), and the YWCA and VFW in Cambridge where there have been shows recently. Re:gen is cool and all, but they can't do every show. My personal favorite, defunct venue is the Fenway Practice Space. It was a big concrete room full of various construction trash in a rehearsal building down the street from Fenway Park, and directly downstairs from a D'Angelos sandwich shop. I left every show at this place wondering how the hell the police had not showed up.

Like any scene report, this is incomplete yet is not meant to be. These are bands that I'm most familiar with and have something to say about.

SOLITARY NEGLECT played their last show recently. These guys



crowd @ regeneration records

were around for a while, but never really went anywhere, maybe because they were from Lowell (ever seen the classic documentary *High On Crack Street*...that is where these guys are from). It's a shame because they were pretty great. Sort of a NINE SHOCKS TERROR thrash sound with DISCHARGE and PARTISANS covers the times that I saw them. Their last set had me regretting the times that I'd not paid attention to them. They released two demos, but Erik the singer says they're not worth hearing. You should ask anyway: Social Napalm PO Box 4073 South Chelmsford, MA 01824-0773 or ewrecknap@hotmail.com

Speaking of Lowell, I cannot neglect to mention KIROTTU. They're pretty inactive right now, but their *Sparks*-fueled inept take on Finnish hardcore was the best inept Finncore around Boston. My favorite KIROTTU moment, besides them covering the Siberian hardcore greats, BASTARDS a few times, was them ending a set by stopping in the middle of a song and *dog-piling* on top of each other, then Jim the drummer telling me later, drunk and whining "I hate my band, we suck, we can't even play," or something to that effect. Get their EP from Social Napalm PO Box 4073 South Chelmsford, MA 01824-0773 or ewrecknap@hotmail.com

Also on Social Napalm is the MISHAP EP. As far as I know they never played out, but this record rages. There are some members shared with STATE CONTROL, so if you're into them or that ENGLISH DOGS/BROKEN BONES metal punk sound, check out this record — it slays. It's a shame they were never that much a band. Same address as above.

POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT aka POSIFORCE play almost every show, and have released an EP and new split seven-inch with OUTRAGED from Watsonville, California, as well as an older demo. They play straightforward fast hardcore with sarcastic and smart lyrics that can only come from the type of people that love hardcore but sort of hate it too. They also share members with other bands, which I'll mention below. Write: 2 Hano Street Allston, MA 02134 or xposiforcex@yahoo.com

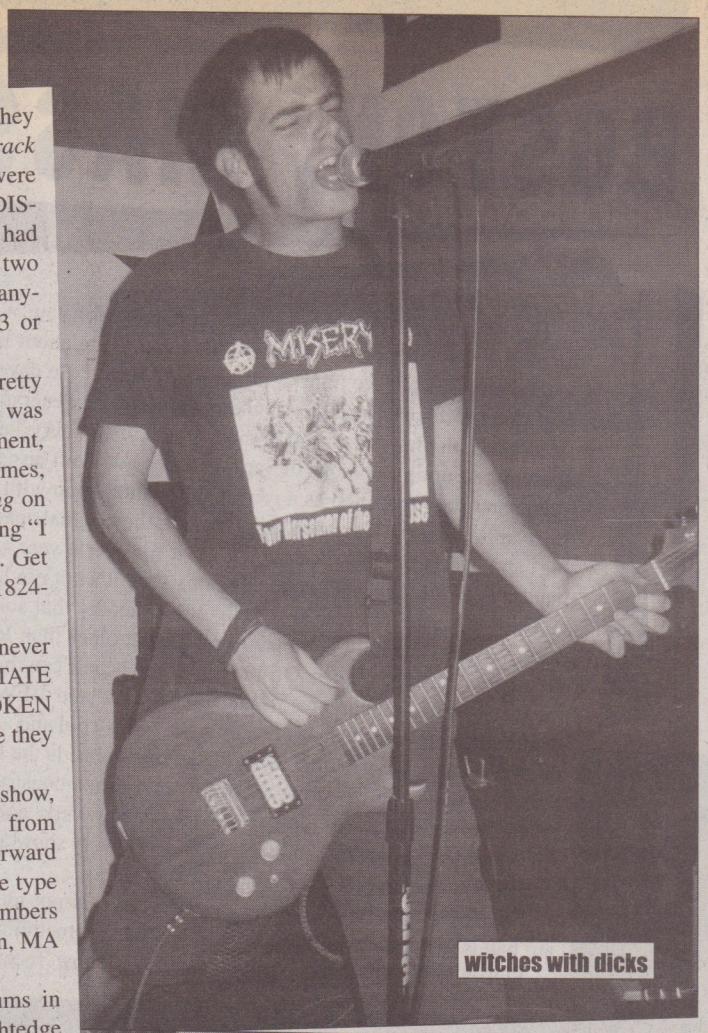
Matt Lieber and Ryan from POSIFORCE also sing and play drums in BLANK STARE who is pretty similar but with the tougher straightedge angle...? The *"straaaaiiiiiggggghhhhtttt eeeeeddddggggeeee"* intro sort of gives it away. They have an EP out. Same address or thelaststraightedgekidsintown@yahoo.com

Ryan also drummed in SEND MORE COPS, who I'm told are no more. They have two demos on one tape and there may be more copies of it: 898 Huntington Ave #3 Boston MA 02115 or smc_boston1@yahoo.com.

SEND MORE COPS guitarist Rob is now playing bass in THE CONVERSIONS with Terry from THE REFUSENIKS switching from bass to vocals and Chris Strunk from loads of bands on drums. They have a pretty original sound, borrowing the stops and starts from GANG OF FOUR and maybe THE MINUTEMEN and mixing it with a more tight and aggressive hardcore sound. It's hard to describe what they sound like because it's not directly derivative of something from the '80s. But these dudes and dudette have talent to burn. There is a demo available that took them approximately 40 hours to record and mix, analogue style. Write to 2 Hano Street Allston, MA 02134 or christopher_strunk@yahoo.com

There's talk of THE CONVERSIONS doing some sort of split with local pop punkers WITCHES WITH DICKS. Dubious name, perhaps, but if you enjoy DILLINGER FOUR or any other classic '90s pop punk, WITCHES WITH DICKS is worth your while. They're catchy, smart, funny, and these guys have some of the best banter around — seriously. They have an older demo with no contact or track listing, and a newer four-track CD. Get in touch at 28 Haskell St #1 Allston MA 02134 or jeff@skitsystem.net.

Speaking of pop punk, half of RINGERS is from Boston so they get a mention. Three-quarters of this band were in SIRENS who had two EPs released when they broke up, but I guess they sort of regrouped and play pretty frequently even though the bassist lives in Maine and the drummer lives in New York. Their gigs usually seem to center around recording, practicing, or tour-



witches with dicks

apeshit

ringers
scapegoat
positive reinforcement
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ing. Heartfelt (in a non corny way if that's possible) and catchy jams with a bit of Oi in the guitar parts is their thing. The CD is out on 1-2-3-4-Go! out of Oakland, California, and I'm pretty sure the singer, Ross Noyes, is doing vinyl at some point. You can probably get in touch with Ross at Re:generation 155 Harvard Ave Allston MA 02134

SLEEPER CELL still plays out sometimes, but not as much as they used too, and we're all still waiting for that LP to drop — summer 2008? They have EPs on Partners In Crime and Cries Of Pain, and they're still the only band in Boston to pull off that DEATHREAT thing. Get in touch at: Jeff Walker 8 Francis St #2 Somerville, MA 02144 or jtwalker@bu.edu. Ask about shirts from tour, there are plenty of leftovers.

Adam and Strunk from the 'CELL now also play in POISON CONTROL, with Ross from RINGERS, Andrew from the late CUT THE SHIT on bass, and the inimitable Dan Wars on vocals. They have yet to record or write more than four songs, but they need to step on it because they're great. Think mid tempo LA/BLACK FLAG style, but thick with two guitars and gruff vocals about the assassination of JFK and god knows what else. No contact because there's no demo yet, but keep those fingers crossed.

Jeff, who plays guitar in SLEEPER CELL, also drums in SOCIAL CIRCKLE, which also features Eric from THE REFUSENIKS, Christian from the late, UK 82 styled EPIDEMIC and some dude from Worcester playing guitar. The concept is first wave punk crossed with first wave hardcore. They have been known to cover the same FUN THINGS song that TEENGENERATE did, but they actually get the lyrics right. There's a demo out: 13 Moraine St Jamaica Plain MA 02130 or msmith7904@yahoo.com. Eric still has some REFUSENIKS LPs left by the way, but they're going fast, write: Eric Yu 104 Bonny Lane North Andover, MA 01845 or ericyu@oneleafrecords.com

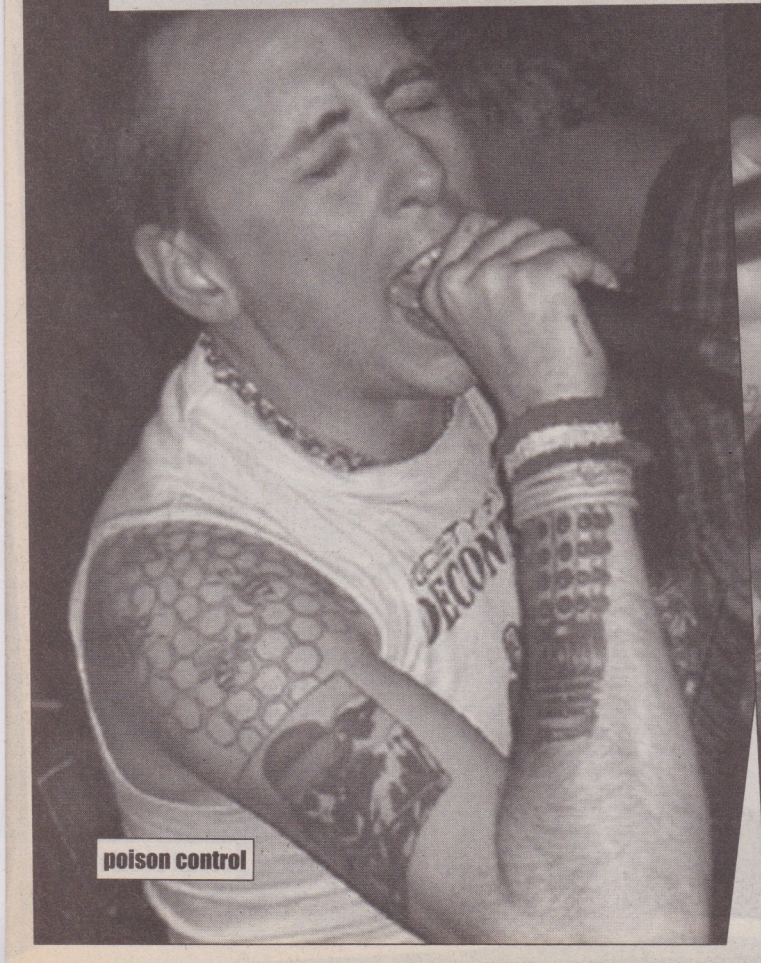
SCAPEGOAT and BORN BACKWARDS both do the CROSSED OUT thing, and share members with other bands. Dave, who plays bass in SCAPEGOAT, sings in BORN BACKWARDS. I've only seen BORN BACKWARDS once and have yet to hear the demo, but they were pretty great live. They played for maybe five minutes and it was noisy as hell. I heard they just added a second guitar. SCAPEGOAT has some dudes from the late TERMINAL YOUTH and have a raw boom box demo with their earlier three-piece lineup, but the intro alone kills. The singer Mark aka *EZ Bake* is only 17 years old, but belts it out. You can get in touch with both these bands through Dave at xcoupxdetatx@gmail.com.

In straight edge news, MENTAL broke up on tour, but the drummer Justin still sings in MIND ERASER, who've been playing a lot of out of town shows lately. If you haven't heard them, they play sick, heavy stuff that gets compared to CITIZEN'S ARREST, NAPALM DEATH, and yes, CROSSED OUT. They have another band called SOUL SWALLOWER that's pretty much in the same vein if you ask me. Their EP just came out on Collapse, and the MIND ERASER LP has been out for a while on Painkiller. Check painkillerrecords.com for MIND ERASER info and to get bummed that the BORN IN HELL demo is sold out.

And I can't finish this without mentioning 40 WATTS. They were around for all of about six months, but played a bunch of shows and then broke up. Basically, Boston's only all-girl punk band needs to get back together and write some more songs. Think three-chord fun in the vein of BLATZ and you're on the right track. Pester them for a demo at 40wattpunx@gmail.com.

—Matt Smith

photos by Al Quint



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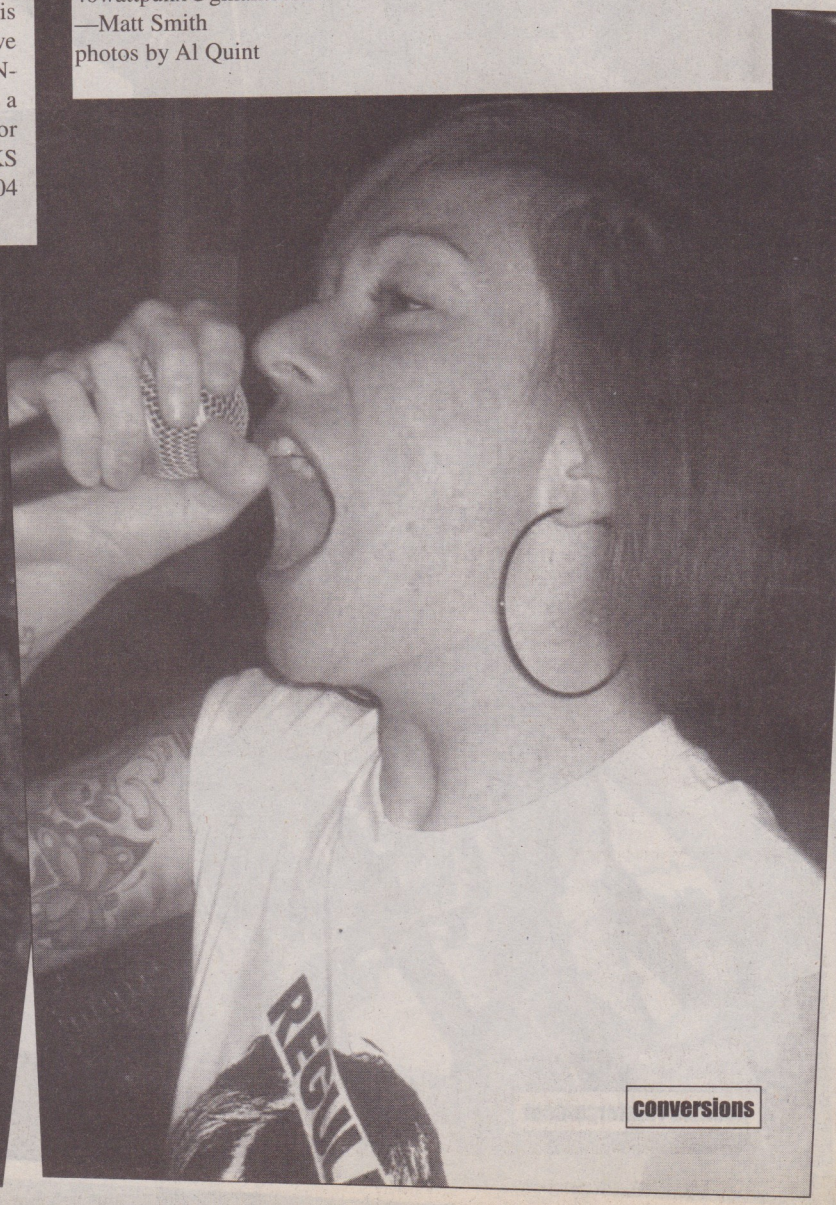

conversions

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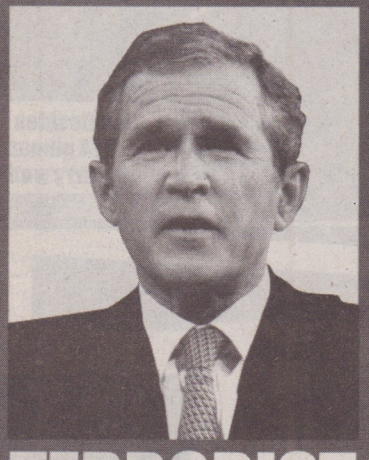

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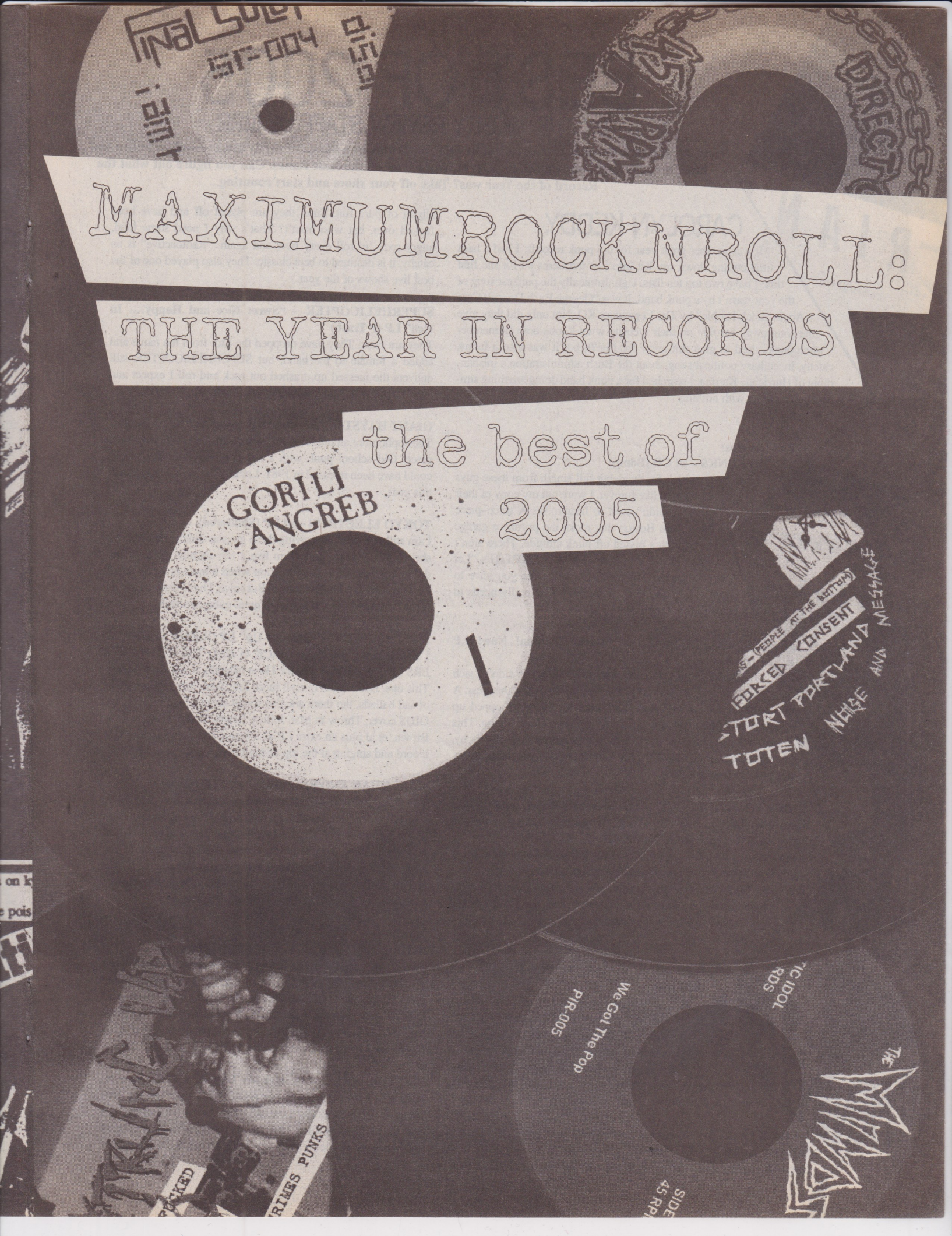


BEST OF 2005

BY THE MIGHTY REVIEW STAFF OF MRR

Here are the Best Records that came out in 2005, according to a bunch of nerdy know–it–alls who live and breathe music and bus exhaust equally, so blame it all on the toxic fumes. Can you figure out what the Record of the Year was? Take off your shoes and start counting...

CAROLYN KEDDY

It was another great year for the punk records. I had a hard time cutting down my list into just ten items so for the first time I have two top ten lists. Ugh. Ironically the punkest song of the year wasn't by a punk band. It was "George Bush Doesn't Care About Black People" by The Legendary KO. Not only did they give the song away for *free* on their website www.k–otix.com (remember when punks used to give shit away for free?), but it was also a funny, catchy, incendiary political song about the Bush administration's mishandling of Hurricane Katrina. I searched for a punk band doing anything similar, but came up with nothing.

On to my lists…

Full Lengths:

THE KONKS – s/t CD (Bomp)

I had been waiting for the debut full length from these guys for what seemed like forever. I wore out my copy of their 7" and I couldn't wait to hear more. A three–piece band from Boston that rocks the primitive garage sound with a pissed off punk attitude. There aren't a lot of bands that can cover AEROSMITH's "Let the Music Do The Talking" and make you have to think, "who did this originally?" This really needs to come out on vinyl.

INTELLECTUALS – "Black! Domina! Now! LP (Hate)

Technically, this one came out in 2004, but it didn't reach *MRR* until early 2005 so I am counting it toward this year. A fantastic Italian two–piece band that surprisingly popped up when two-piece bands were all the rage and oh so boring. This guy and gal pump new life into the genre by writing catchy, punky garage songs. "All Right!" is my favorite, sounding bratty and sexy at the same time.

JOHN WILKES BOOZE – "Heliocentric Views John Wilkes Booze Pts. 1&2" LP (St. Ives) and **"Telescopic Eyes Glance the Future Sick" LP (Kill Rock Stars)**

Not one, but two John Wilkes Booze records this year. Thank you! More of their great punked out soul music with Seth's fabulously distinctive vocals. Each record is great in its own way. *Heliocentric* has the longer, more psychedelic, jazzy tunes and the hand–painted cover. *Telescopic* has the catchier songs, some of the best they have written.

TIMES NEW VIKING – "Dig Yourself" LP (Siltbreeze)

This is a refreshingly different punk album. Sounding at times like the BRENTWOODS meet SUPERCHUNK, there are art–punk style, staccato guitar riffs with female and male vocals that are distorted yet manage to sound cute, but not in an annoying way. "Not High" is a fabulous, short, and catchy song and one of my favorites of the year.

JACK SAINTS – "Rock and Roll Saved Our Lives…But Now It Is Trying To Kill Us" LP (Scarey)

One of San Francisco's most under–appreciated bands delivers a great album of pure fun. Sure, they are pissed off and have been fucked over, but who hasn't? That's why I need some loud, angry rock 'n' roll every now and again. "Radioactive" is so catchy, it is destined to be a classic. They also played one of the best live shows of the year.

SUPERHELICOPTER – "Sweet Nice and Happy…. In Hell" LP (P Trash)

They are back. They have dropped the Ltd. from the name and added a female to the band, but SUPERHELICOPTER still delivers the messed up, trashed out rock and roll I expect and need from them. And a full length this time too. Hurray!

GIANT HAYSTACKS – "Blunt Instrument" 12" (Mistake)

The sophomore album from this wonderful San Francisco three piece. Old–school punk with a social conscience, this record could have been released in 1981. Luckily for us, it was released this year.

TOKYO ELECTRON – s/t LP (Shattered)

I am still regretting not giving these guys as much attention as I should have when I saw them live a few months back. In my defense, it is hard to pay attention when a band is sandwiched between two Jay Reatard bands. But since, I have listened to this record over and over. It is such a great garage record.

SOUTH FILTHY – "Crackin' Up" LP (Rockin' Bones)

I was debating picking the JACK O AND THE TEARJERKERS LP over this one because I love listening to Mr. Yarber sing. This one, however, is overall more fun. Sure, there are a couple of sad ballads, but there are also songs about beer and a HICKOIDS cover. Throw in Msr. Jeffery Evans, Walter Daniels, Dan Brown, et al plus an extra LP as a bonus and I am blasting this record and singing at the top of my lungs. Fuck the neighbors!

KING KHAN AND BBQ SHOW – s/t LP (Goner)

Two former SPACESHITS who are now each a one–man band, join forces and the results are amazing. As great as one–man bands are, when you get two together it is twice as cool. When you see you see them live you realize BBQ does most of the work playing guitar, drumming, and singing, but at least KING KHAN takes his clothes off for the audience's amusement or horrification, depending where you are standing.

7"s:

SMIRK/ BEST PALS – split 7" (Broken Pals)

Two of my favorite songs this year come conveniently on one 7". SMIRK's "Cell–phony" a teasing ode to jerks and their cell phones, complete with the chorus of "Can you hear me now? Can you hear me now?" BEST PALS' "Snack Attack" is a great sing-a–long tribute to the band's enjoyment of snacking. Plus there is one more song from each band. Cool.

MYSTERY GIRLS – "Under My Tongue" EP (Kryptonite)

Although I do not use drugs myself, for some reason I love songs about doing drugs. I guess I prefer to live vicariously. On this 7" the Mystery Girls give me two songs about drug taking that would fit in nicely with any 3 STONED MEN song, plus

two others. This record has some of the best and catchiest songs the MYSTERY GIRLS have recorded.

HIPS – "James Brown" EP (Going Underground)
Short, catchy, dance-y garage songs from this band with the short name. Lo–fi tunes with pained, screaming vocals. This one gets played a lot around my house. Since releasing this they have moved to San Francisco and changed their name to the SABOTEURS.

ANGRY ANGLES – "Things Are Moving" EP (Shattered)
Amazingly, Jay Reatard never disappoints. Similar to the LOST SOUNDS, but without keyboards. "Things Are Moving" is so catchy and one of the best songs Jay's ever written. They were really great live too.

THE ORPHANS – "Electric S" 7" (Vinyl Dog)
Finally recordings of the Orphans that sound as great as they do live. The songs are powerful and catchy punk, but the record is way too short. I want more.

SIDS – "Kandy Kane" EP (Army Of Bad Luck)
Messy and weird new wave trash. Well, not really. There is a keyboard, but it is put to better use than the so–called new wave. In fact the music bears more resemblance to the SCREAMERS and I don't give that compliment out that easily.

MINDS – "We Got the Pop" 7" (Plastic Idol)
Catchy punk songs. It is something most bands don't think of doing too much these days. And they cover one of my all–time favorite songs LA PESTE's "Don't Wanna Die In My Sleep Tonight." Cool.

DUTCH MASTERS – "Radioactive" EP (Goner)
Eric Friedl's latest band maintains the garage rock sound perfected by his better-known band THE OBLIVIANS. Stripped–down, catchy garage punk and the second really great song called "Radioactive" this year.

SULTANAS – "You're The One" 7" (Boom Boom Of Renton)
I wasn't going to pick this one since the girls involved don't play the music, but the songs are really good, even if, as I suspect, some boy wrote them. The girls sing real nice and maybe like THEE HEADCOATEES before them, someday they will pick up the instruments and start playing.

NIX – "Down The Tubes" EP
Four quick blasts of punk rock attitude. It is finished before you know it so I just keep playing it over and over. Luckily all four songs are on one side.

Best Retrospective Collections of 2005:
ICKY BOYRFRIENDS – "A Love Obscene" CD (Menlo Park)
DIRTBOMBS – "If You Don't Already Have A Look" CD (In The Red)
KARATE PARTY – "Black Helicopter" LP (S–S)

ROB COONS

DEAD STOP – "Live For Nothing" LP (Havoc)
How the fuck has this band flown under my radar for so long? I have heard them before, but for some reason I just didn't catch on....until now. Simply put, this is ferocious, brute force hardcore. This four–piece from Belgium takes old-school elements from bands like NEGATIVE APPROACH and puts the hammer down and creates a non–stop barrage of musical intensity. Completely unreal!

CAREER SUICIDE – "Invisible Eyes" 12" (Feral Ward)
Damn, this fucking thing smokes! It leaves me thinking is it from 1982 or 2005? Aggressive tunes packed with snotty–ass vocals, wild jingly guitars and lots of intense uncontrollable speed. I got to see these guys a few times this year and they lived up to all my expectations. Coming soon to the next *This Is Boston, Not LA* compilation....oh wait they are from Canada.

YO–SHI – "Death of the Sun" CD (Devour)
These guys are definitely on top of the list this year as the "best band you have never heard." Musically, they follow a path laid out by bands like DSB with pressure building intros, fist pumping riffs, lots of shouted backing vocals. The forth song on this CD is one of my favorite songs of the year. It has one of those intense intros that make me want to punch holes in the wall and stage dive off second floor balconies. Fucking raging! Do yourself a favor and track this one down.

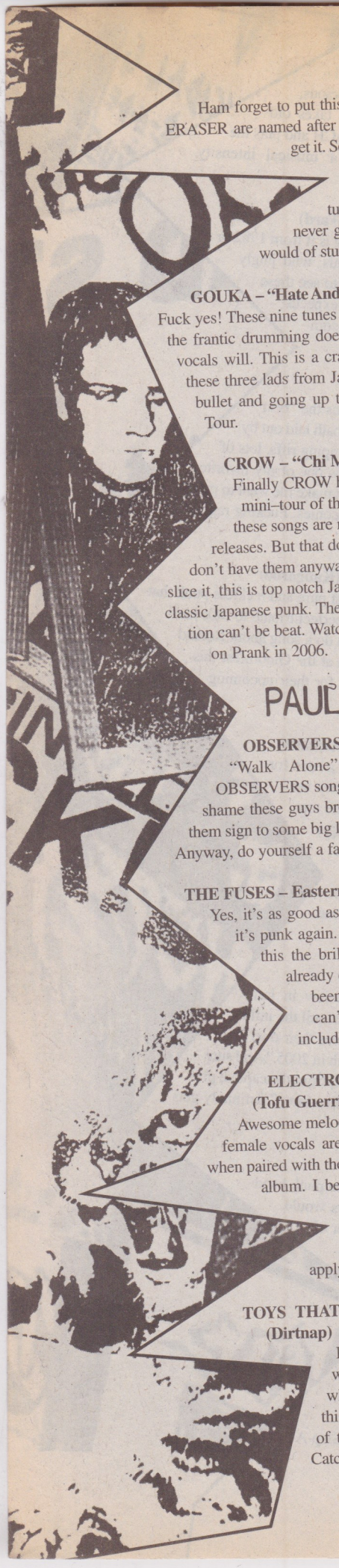
DIRECT CONTROL – "You're Controlled" LP (Kangaroo)
No gimmicks or bullshit to be found here. This is just pure and reckless punk that screams "get the fuck out of my way!" They are a perfect tribute to '80s hardcore, without sounding stale or overdone. They even do a song about Ronald Reagan, and it is a fucking ripper! Got to see them at the Gloomfest this past year and they were awesome and I can't wait for their upcoming Bay Area shows.

LOOK BACK AND LAUGH – s/t 12" (Lengua Armada)
I would be insane not to include this powerhouse of a band for the second consecutive year in my top ten. This is their second full–length and it is just as intense and over the top as the first one. Tobia's vocals sound even more angry and aggressive this time around. The music is relentless and aurally violent. And if you are still missing the boat and haven't seen them live yet….do yourself a favor and get to it! Seriously, they are one of the best live shows around.

REGULATIONS – s/t LP (Havoc)
To quote myself from my REGULATIONS review in last year–ends top ten, I said "I love it when bands can cull the influences of eras that are long gone and nail it as if was their own 20+ years later› I hope these guys release in a full length in 2005." And sure enough they put one out. This is a flawless record, from the captive production to the simple yet effective cover art. "Police Siren" definitely gets honors as the catchiest song of the year.

SELFISH – "Cause Pain" 12" (Feral Ward)
If there was an award for the "best non–Japanese punk band to sound Japanese in 2005," these Finnish guys would take the cake. Taking cues from the urgent power of bands like PAINTBOX and ROCKY & THE SWEDEN, SELFISH nails it on the head with these six songs. It is all here. Ripping fast riffs, punishing low–end bass lines, booming gruff vocals, wanky guitar solos.....fucking aces all around.

MIND ERASER – "Cave" LP (Painkiller)
Whoa! Did somebody say powerviolence? Did Slap-A-



Ham forget to put this out back in 1991? Oh wait, MIND ERASER are named after a NEANDERTHAL song … now I get it. Seriously though, this shit fucking rips. Alternating between fast as fuck and slow and powerful, these tunes (and those hate–filled vocals) never give the listener a break! Sure wish I would of stuck around to see them at Gilman.

GOUKA – "Hate And Day" LP (Putrid Filth Conspiracy)
Fuck yes! These nine tunes are so frenzied and aggressive that if the frantic drumming doesn't get you, then the wildly barked vocals will. This is a crazed and distorted masterpiece from these three lads from Japan. I seriously regret not biting the bullet and going up to Portland to see them on their US Tour.

CROW – "Chi Maida" CD
Finally CROW hits us with another full–length and mini–tour of the USA in 2005. Granted, a few of these songs are re–recorded from earlier hard to find releases. But that doesn't really matter since most people don't have them anyway. Regardless, no matter how you slice it, this is top notch Japcore that melds the best in crust and classic Japanese punk. The raging tunes and top-notch production can't be beat. Watch for the vinyl of this to be released on Prank in 2006.

PAUL CURRAN

OBSERVERS – "Walk Alone" 7" (Johnny Cat)
"Walk Alone" sounds just like every other OBSERVERS song, only ten times better somehow. It's a shame these guys broke up, but it's way better than seeing them sign to some big label and go the way of AGAINST ME! Anyway, do yourself a favor and get this one.

THE FUSES – Eastern Cities LP (Shit Sandwich)
Yes, it's as good as everyone says. So post-post-punk that it's punk again. I may be a little off base, but I hear in this the brilliant album that SOCIAL UNREST's already excellent *Before the Fall* LP could have been. It grows and grows on you until you can't get it off;the record should have included some kind salve or ointment for that.

ELECTRODUENDES – Salgo a la Calle LP (Tofu Guerrilla, Logofobia, & five others)
Awesome melodic hardcore punk from Spain. Excellent female vocals are the star of the show, but they're best when paired with the male vocals as they are on much of this album. I believe Jake Filth coined the term "crust pop" to describe Bay Area bands like THIS IS MY FIST!and BEFORE THE FALL, and it can easily apply to this band as well. A surprise hit!

TOYS THAT KILL – Don't Take My Clone 7" (Dirtnap)
Like the OBSERVERS single it's exactly what you would expect from this band, which is already something great, but on this record they do an even better impression of themselves than I ever thought possible. Catchy, catchy.

GORILLA ANGREB – Aborted 2000 EP (Feral Ward), Lokum split 7" ((Hjernespind) and live
The best and most exciting live band we've had around here in years.The records are timeless classics, like the AVENGERS and BLATZ. You'll sing along even though you'll have no idea what you're saying, and you'll curse them for taking so long between recordings!

KNUGEN FALLER – Inte Som Ni EP (Wasted Sounds)
Martin hates this record, thinks it's too bubblegum or something.That's the very reason I love it, probably. This is the kind of pop music that should be on the radio. It harkens back to classic powerpop and super early Scandi-punk while still sounding modern and unique.

HIDDEN SPOTS – demo
For the HIDDEN SPOTS I am coining the word "heartfeltedness." Members of Chattanooga, Tennessee's JACK PALANCE BAND bring your more of whatyou would expect. That being gruff vocalled, melodic punk rock with an extra heaping helping of, yes, heartfeltedness.

HARD SKIN – Same Meat Different Gravy LP (Hermit)
I honestly think that this could be the best Oi band of all time. They may just be taking the piss, but I'm not sure anymore. All of their songs actually seem heartfelt, while being hilarious and singalongable to boot. Get it? … "Boot"? … Alright, I'll leave the humor to the professionals…

THE FOUR EYES – Sweet Sounds CD
Like Hard Skin, it's difficult to tell where the joke ends with these guys, or if there ever was one in the first place. These guys aremusical geniuses in disguise as nerds playing simple lo-fi pop punk. How many times can I say "catchy" in my year-end top ten?

GIANT HAYSTACKS – Blunt Instrument 12" (Mistake)
I often wonder to myself, do I only like this album because I think Allan is such an awesome dude or is it because this is a truly great band? The answer is always: both. I listen to this album a lot and it always hits the spot in different ways; sometimes it cheers me up, sometimes it's just the thing I need for being somber andintrospective, and sometimes I like to just marvel at how any band can play their instruments so well.

Honorable Mentions:
DIGGER AND THE PUSSYCATS – EP & LP (P. Trash)
This Aussie band gave us one of the great hits of the year with"Sergi" (on both the EP & LP), but some of their other songs leave much to be desired.

BENT OUTTA SHAPE – "Stray Dog Town" LP (Recess)
Probably should've been on my top ten but I thought it might be too new to know for sure. In the words of the great Yoichi Eimori, "This record makes me very happy."

And that one **MARKED MEN** single that Chris keeps playing, and that Yoichi was listening to too. Shit, that bass line rules

ELLIOTT LANGE

2005 really was an unusually strong year for grind—or maybe I was just paying closer attention. First though, a couple collections of old(er) stuff that would've easily made the list, but I left them off so as to make room for the new stuff: the reissue of O.L.D.'s classic long–out–of–print *Old Lady Drivers* as the *Regurgitation* bootleg, and the full CD discography of legendary West Bay antagonists, NO LESS– *Le$$on$ 93–98* (Push Down and Turn). Don't miss 'em.

1. MISERY INDEX – "Dissent" LP (Anarchos)
Though perhaps disqualifiable since the CD came out in late '04, the LP didn't reach MRR till '05, so I feel justified in listing it anyway. Only five songs, but most likely still the thing I listened to most this year and

I think their best stuff yet; perfect death/grind with melody, crushing breakdowns, and inspiring political content.

2. THE ENDLESS BLOCKADE – "Turn Illness into a Weapon" CD (Sound Pollution) & live
Both #'s two & three on this list win the coming–out–of–nowhere, best new band prize, and they're both from Canada, go figure. BLOCKADE takes the best of ultra–slow and ultra–fast MITB–worshipping power violence and creates endlessly clever unique and catchy ways of being utterly brutalizing.

3. POSER DISPOSER – "Waiting to Inhale" CD (RSR)
See note for #2. These Saskatchewan stoners blast out absolutely perfect grind with non–stop speed, energy, and funny lyrics. Wins for the chorus alone: "Drugs win the drug war, they just wanted it more."

4. BIRDFLESH / CATHETER – "Time to Face Extinction" split LP (Civilisation)
A great pairing of two of grind's present best. Granted I like this more for BIRDFLESH's goofy yet clinically precise attack than the CATHETER stuff, if only because of their poor recording. Consider it a sort of stand–in for CATHETER's incredible new full–length *Dimension 303*, which just hasn't hit the reviews pages yet.

5. PHOBIA– "Get Up and Kill" CD (Deep Six)
I admit I'd sort of lost enthusiasm for PHOBIA after all this time, but this one renewed my faith with a vengeance. A whole new level of intensity and power, this is easily now my favorite record of these long–running SoCal grinders.

6. SKARP – "Requiem" CD (Alternative Tentacles)
I'd also completely missed out on this great female–fronted Seattle black metal/grind outfit the last couple years too. Seriously fast suicide–obsessed grind with those mean–ass bass drop thingies and catchy as all hell too, this is the heaviest thing from Alt. Tentacles since BRUJERIA.

7. KILL THE CLIENT – "Escalation of Hostilities" CD (Willowtip)
While after repeated listens I still don't think this is nearly as good as last year's *Wage Slave*, it's indicative of how great this band is that their "sophomore slump" is still easily in my Top Ten. Unbelievably intense, with a brimming blown–out production and some of the most ferocious vocals (and intelligent lyrics) ever.

8. GRIDE – "1996–2003" CD (Plazzma)
A full discography from this still mostly overlooked Czech grind band. This includes unreleased and comp tracks plus their great splits with MRTVA BUDOUCNOST and COCKROACH but most importantly, a new full–length record *Tanec Blaznu (Fools Dance)* that is perhaps their best yet. Dizzyingly fast and technical hardcore/grind with a dozen changes per minute and just manic intensity.

9. MESRINE – "I Choose Murder" CD (Crimes Against Humanity)
If you're not doing anything new, you might as well do it really well. These Canadian mugs play dyed–in–the–wool (presumably with blood) death/grind ala HEMDALE and DAHMER but go so full–bore crazy with non–stop blasting and screaming on every impossibly catchy track, it's like CARCASS ripped *them* off.

10. INSECT WARFARE – "At War with Grindcore" EP (625) & live
Probably my favorite 7" of the year is the debut of this bulldozing Houston group playing classic old–school Earache Records grind like BOLT THROWER meets TERRORIZER. They were devastating live, plus these guys may have the best T–shirt design of all time with a picture of a giant mantis eviscerating a LOCUST–T–shirt–wearing dude with a caption reading "Death to False Grind." Amen.

MITCH CARDWELL

I will limit myself to discussing only ten releases this year, so this isn't my full list. If you wanna see my whole 2005 rundown of EPs, LPs, and reissues, visit www.terminal–boredom.com.

BUSY SIGNALS – "Love And Dust" EP (Douche Master)
The single of the year, period. Three tracks, mixing sugar and slash in perfect proportions, brought to us by a band of capable, good–looking punkers. We should all be so lucky.

TIME FLYS – "Fly" LP (Birdman)
Like I said in my initial review of this record, *Fly* is the punkest album of the year. I always find myself gravitating to bands that just don't care. I can assure you that these cats *do not give a fuck.*

LYME REGIS – "It Starts With The Band" EP (SmartGuy)
Ex–FM KNIVES return with a disc as strong as expected. If only they played out of Sacramento more often…

FORMALDEHYDE JUNKIES – "Are A Total Wreck" EP (Firestarter)
I enjoyed this much more than any of the CAREER SUICIDE, DIRECT CONTROL, and REGULATIONS releases this year. The guitar sound alone makes this a no–brainer.

BLACK LIPS – "Let It Bloom" LP (In The Red)
Light years beyond anything they had done previously, this will probably be the record from 2005 that people really remember. The puking and dickplay has taken a backseat to Flower Punk.

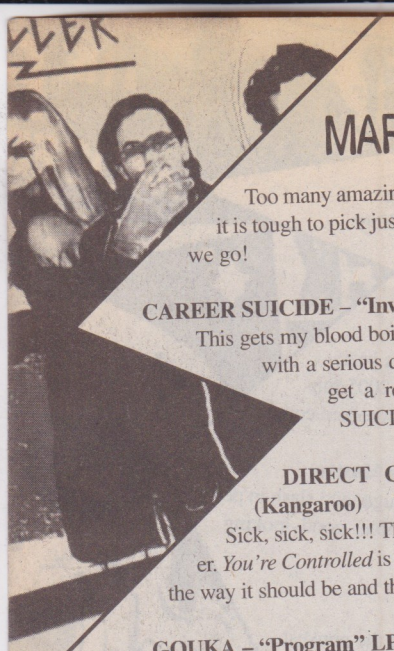
CARBONAS – "Blackout" EP (Shattered)
Just like everything else they've done, this makes other catchy PUNK bands look like jokes. Two LPs due to be released in 2006.

RIVER CITY TANLINES – "All The 7 Inches Plus 2 More" LP (Soul Is Cheap)
Too bad the LP version was limited to a mere fifty copies. Mr. Wells' post–LOST SOUNDS analysis (leaner, meaner, more guitar) nailed it. Alicja can do no wrong.

FRUSTRATION – "Artists Suck" 12" (Born Bad)
Freezing French post–punk that's dark, smart and impossible to shake from your brain. I can't wait to hear more.

NIX – "Down the Tubes" EP (self–released)
Uh, perfect.

ICKY BOYFRIENDS – "A Love Obscene" 2xCD (Menlo Park Recordings)
The ICKY BOYFRIENDS are something that every man, woman, and child should be exposed to at least once in their lifetime. Like chicken pox.



MARTIN SORRONDEGUY

Too many amazing records have come out in the last year and it is tough to pick just ten, but that is what was asked of me. Here we go!

CAREER SUICIDE – "Invisible Eyes" 12" (Feral Ward)
This gets my blood boiling, it is such a great record. Great hardcore with a serious dosage of punk, that is the only way you can get a record to work in this way, and CAREER SUICIDE does it fucking right!

DIRECT CONTROL – "You're Controlled" LP (Kangaroo)
Sick, sick, sick!!! This band has delivered one classic after another. *You're Controlled* is frantic and fast without falling apart. Hardcore the way it should be and the way it was while I was growing up.

GOUKA – "Program" LP (Putrid Filth Conspiracy)
After you get done punching holes in a wall, and you realized you have permanently damaged your hand, when the hospital bill comes in you can blame GOUKA for possessing you to do such stupid shit! This is power, motherfuckers! Not for the weak, this is a prime example of the insanity Japan has been bringing to the world of hardcore punk since the beginning. This record works me the fuck out!

LOOK BACK AND LAUGH – s/t 12" (Lengua Armada)
Yeah, I know I put it out. This band rules! No need for me to say anything else about it.

VÄÄRINKÄSITYS – "Sota–Apärät" LP (Putrid Filth Conspiracy)
Coming out of Finland with that fast and furious style of hardcore that I love so much. A total throw back to early '80s Finnish stuff. Lots of short songs with loads of power and energy.

FORMALDEHYDE JUNKIES – "Are A Total Wreck" EP (Underestimated)
The second I dropped the needle on this record I knew it would make my top 10. The guitar sound is so amazing—rapid and raging stuff here. This Midwest outfit is on the verge of falling apart but then again aren't we all? So when you do, play this fucker.

STRUNG UP – "Warfucked" EP (Tank Crimes)
In any debate about this band, I got their backs. I love this band up there with LBAL—STRUNG UP is one of my Bay Area favorites. This EP is nasty and raw. Live they are fucking great and totally hold their own.

PERSEVERE – "Sex Tracks" EP (Insane World)
This Japanese band drives forward with some great punk. It makes me want to sing along but I can't make shit out, so I just annunciate and sound like a dumb ass. A great record.

DIGGER & THE PUSSYCATS – "Card Shark Annie" EP (P. Trash)
Not a hardcore band; this is pretty fucking punk though. "Sergi" is so reminiscent of JIM CARROLL's "People Who Died" I flipped when I first heard it. I then immediately put it on a mix tape. We've got an amazing song here, I am always sing along on the "Uh uh huh" part. This had to be on my top for the year. Great!

OBSERVERS – "Walk Alone" EP (Jonny Cat)
Infectious! I am all about this stuff. Amazing punk, great melodies that will get you and never let go. You just can't deny it. This record is good.

RUNNER UPS:
SKATE KORPSE – "Front Page White Out" EP (DSK)
I was quite pleased with this record. Their first single was cool but this one is great! This has a SoCal sound going on that just sticks with you. Great guitars with awesome melodies.
GOVERNMENT WARNING – "No Way Out" EP (No Way)
Good, old, hardcore with loads of punk attitude. Great!

OUTRAGED/TROPIEZO – split EP (Punx Before Profits)
A nice team up here. Both bands are cool but OUTRAGED kills.

KYKLOOPPIEN SUKUPUUTTO – both EPs
Finland delivers once again, energy and strength coming from this band, powerful songs that stick with me.

REISSUES:
1. PANADERIA BOLLERIA NUESTRA SENORA DE CARMEN / TDK – split 7"
2. BLUTTAT – LPs
3. RATTUS – "Poko Recordings" 2xLP
4. STIMULATORS "Loud Fast Rules" 7"
5. KLIMAX – LP
6. BAGS "Survive" 7"
7. NEGATIVE APPROACH "Ready to Fight" 2xLP
8. FREEZE "I Hate Tourists" 7"
9. STATE "No Illusions" 7"
10. RIISTETYT "Skitsofrenia" LP

LAYLA GIBBON

1. LOOK BACK AND LAUGH – 2nd 12" (Lengua Armada)
Easily the best band in the Bay Area right now. Tobia is so fucking inspiring to watch, the total energy and passion, which sounds so corny but is true. I think of her as being in line with fucking John Brannon or Ian Mackaye as totally iconic front persons in hardcore bands that defined their time. LOOK BACK AND LAUGH is hardcore in the best sense, and tho' initially maybe hardcore was suburban teen boredom music one of the things I love about watching LBAL is that they reclaim it for those of us that are, uh, aging gracefully? It's like, yes you can grow up and stay punk as fuck. I think this is the first of their records that captures the essence of the live show for me at least, the fucking fury and power and undeniability that is LOOK BACK AND LAUGH; hardcore for the fuckin' hardcore, yo.

2. OBSERVERS – "Walk Alone" 7" (Johnny Cat)
I think without hesitation that the OBSERVERS are as good as any classic punk band you can list off. I think they are probably the best band of the last twenty years, I mean seriously. So many conversations have been had about the amazing music that is being created in the context of the DIY punk scene right now, it's a time I think that will be looked back on with jealous wonder, and the OBSERVERS are the best. Watching them play the zillion times I saw them over the past couple of years I was always amazed that no one showed up; I know it's different in Portland, but damn, one of the best bands ever should have a legion of devoted, tireless fans at all shows. Whenever I dragged people to see them play they would be blown away because how could you not be? I think of all the people that go see fucking MTV emo bands and dry hump retread thrash and wonder, what is wrong with the world that the OBSERVERS didn't sell out the Fillmore every night? I mean I guess that would piss me off too, but hey, I am contradictory like that. But fuck, this record is so rad. The song "Walk Alone" is like a movie, like railroad tracks and all night coffee and conversations about nothing and everything. Seriously. An anthemic classic from a classic band.

3. FUCKED UP – "Generation" 7" (Slasher)
What can I say? Probably the most hyped band in hardcore right now. Justifiably so? After seeing them play over and over and over I would have to say yes. It's really easy to get blasé about going to see shows in the Bay Area because there's so much on offer, like "Oh another touring Japanese hardcore band—whatever." But I went to pretty much every show this band played locally this year and last. I think it's funny how on one hand they have this image, the obscure references and imagery, and the super limited friends and family records, but then their interviews always normalize the myth for me, they just talk about records and their jobs rather than obscure medieval Christian cults, or whatever. And this record is phenomenal. But either you know that or you don't care.

4. PEDESTRIANS – s/t 7" (Southkore)
I know their LP is going to make a lot of people's top tens already and I am not being contrary by putting this on instead. It's partly because I don't have the LP yet (fuck Xmas mail!) and tho' the vocals on one of the songs on this is a little off for me, I love this and listened to it continuously. It looks really cool as a record, with the die-cut holes, and the way the band name is situated kind of reminds me in this weird way of a hand-made Tim Yo record cover. The sound is weirdly timeless and undefinable; it's super punk but I can't think of specific reference points. It kind of sits in the space between hardcore and punk, it's snotty and heartfelt, smart and brash. I am so psyched to see this band play.

5. GORILLA ANGREB – "Long Island" 7" (Spild Af Vinyl)
I preface this by saying I love the *Astma* 7" best and this sounds *nothing* like that. When we first listened to it, it was like listening to a whole other band. Mai's vocals that make neck hairs stand up all smoothed out and the desperate sounding music gone too... but this is fucking rad. It's a great pop record from one of my favorite bands right now and has stood up to multiple listens. But what's up with the super limited pressing? C'mon now. It also makes me super psyched to hear what this band is going to do this year, and what the hell the 12" is gonna sound like. Everything they have put out has been great but totally disparate sounding. I like how her voice can have the just about controlled mania of EXENE CERVENKA or the soul and passion of PENELOPE HOUSTON, it's like the culmination of the raddest punk girl vocals...

6. KNUGEN FALLER – "Inte Som Ne" 7" (Wasted Sounds)
This band needs to tour; the best kind of *Killed by Death/Messthetics* collision, pop with a snarl. Her voice is so cool, and the music is the raddest kind of instant punk clatter, plus it's catchy as fuk. In writing this top ten I am realizing my vocabulary is limited to about four words. Sorry 'bout that.

7. BLACK LIPS – "Let It Bloom" LP (In the Red)
My favourite garage band since the GORIES. I didn't ever really care too much about them until this record (sorry purists!) but damn, it's so good. It's desperate falling apart music that is trashy and fun and ridiculous and vaguely disquieting; basement trashed out rock 'n' roll doom.

8. GOVERNMENT WARNING – 7" (No Way)
Another record that passed me by until I was at a friend's DJ night and it hit me like a ton of bricks. Perfect hardcore. This is my favourite kind of music, really catchy early '80s–style hardcore that sounds like it could come from a basement in Southern California or Boston or DC circa 1982.

9. SPIDER AND THE WEBS – demo
I love this band. Tobi Vail is one of the best drummers ever and it's so great to hear her actually record something after seeing a zillion of her post–BIKINI KILL bands just play basement shows etc., not to dismiss that because it seems like people put out records as soon as their band is formed nowadays.

Anyway, her band is magic like JAY ADAMS or ROKY ERIKSON, with the qualities of the SHOP ASSISTANTS and 13th FLOOR ELEVATORS and TRONICS–like DIY psych–out. Like if Chantal Goya played drums and other things like that. The band switches around a lot but she sings on everything pretty much. Meaning to say she isn't always a singing drummer—which I hate, I mean Don Henley is the precedent right?—but also plays guitar and... well if you are a fan of Tobi's work you should try to get this because it's pretty fucking great.

10. *TIE*:
CAREER SUICIDE – "Invisible Eyes" 12" (Feral Ward)
DIRECT CONTROL – "You're Controlled" LP (Kangaroo)
SKITKIDS – "Valkomna Till Paradiset" EP (540)
This is totally cheating but my other favourite records that came out this year were these, they all tied. I also loved the **HARD SKIN LP** and for reissues the **AS MERCENÁRIAS LP**. I just can't decide.

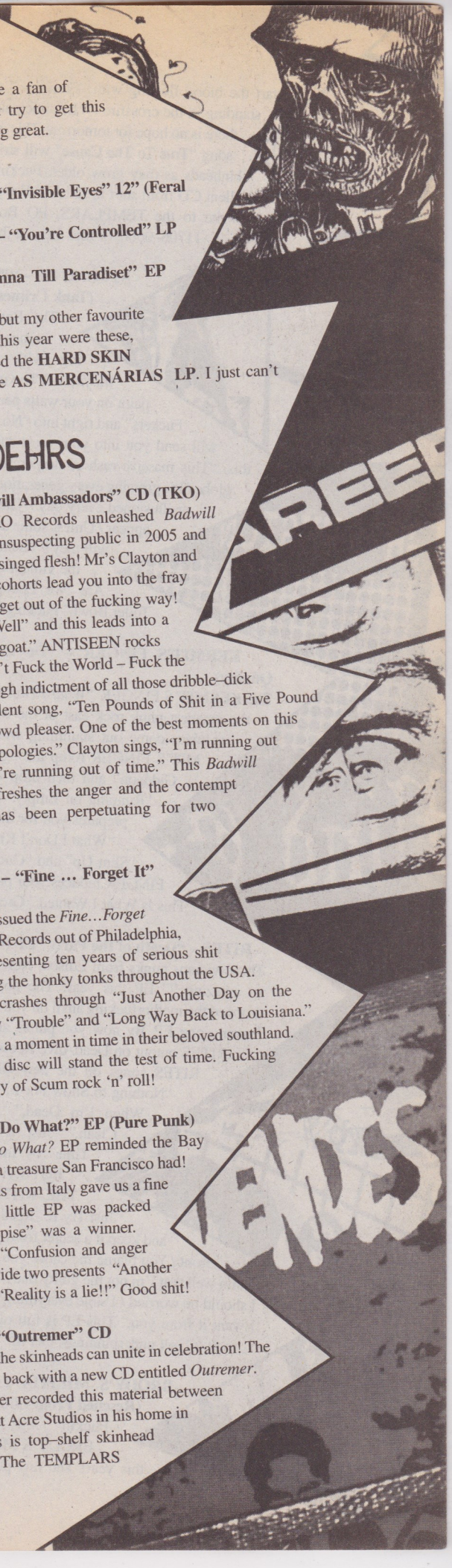
BRUCE ROEHRS

ANTISEEN – "Badwill Ambassadors" CD (TKO)
ANTISEEN and TKO Records unleashed *Badwill Ambassadors* on an unsuspecting public in 2005 and you can still smell the singed flesh! Mr's Clayton and Young and their evil cohorts lead you into the fray with "Alpha Male" – get out of the fucking way! You get "Alive and Well" and this leads into a rocking song, "Scapegoat." ANTISEEN rocks your brain with "Don't Fuck the World – Fuck the Kids," with its thorough indictment of all those dribble–dick PC fucks. The excellent song, "Ten Pounds of Shit in a Five Pound Bag" is always a crowd pleaser. One of the best moments on this CD comes in "No Apologies." Clayton sings, "I'm running out of patience and you're running out of time." This *Badwill Ambassador* CD refreshes the anger and the contempt that ANTISEEN has been perpetuating for two decades!

HELLSTOMPER – "Fine … Forget It" CD (Steelcage)
HELLSTOMPER issued the *Fine…Forget It* CD on Steelcage Records out of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, representing ten years of serious shit kicking and playing the honky tonks throughout the USA. HELLSTOMPER crashes through "Just Another Day on the Road," followed by "Trouble" and "Long Way Back to Louisiana." This band captured a moment in time in their beloved southland. The songs on this disc will stand the test of time. Fucking classic Confederacy of Scum rock 'n' roll!

CROPKNOX – "Do What?" EP (Pure Punk)
CROPKNOX's *Do What?* EP reminded the Bay Area punks what a treasure San Francisco had! Pure Punk Records from Italy gave us a fine swan song. This little EP was packed with hits. "I Despise" was a winner. Read the words: "Confusion and anger will take a toll." Side two presents "Another Barn Burned!": "Reality is a lie!!" Good shit!

TEMPLARS – "Outremer" CD
Fuck yes! All of the skinheads can unite in celebration! The TEMPLARS are back with a new CD entitled *Outremer*. Mr. Carl Fritscher recorded this material between 1999 and 2003 at Acre Studios in his home in New York. This is top–shelf skinhead rock and roll! The TEMPLARS



start the blood flowing with "Frontline," about a soldier who is standing in the crossfire — he anticipates the battle; he knows there is no hope for tomorrow. This is a very good song! The song "True To The Cause" will strike a chord with all the skinheads as they grow older. Fucking amazing! This is an excellent CD from start to finish!!! For your copy of *Outremer*, write to the TEMPLARS, PO Box 602, Bayshore, NY 11706–0660, or find them at thetemplars.com.

STRUNG UP – "Warfucked" EP (Tank Crimes)

The Bay Area's STRUNG UP comes out of the chute careening with psychotic thrash on *Warfucked*! The manic hardcore keeps the paint on your walls peeling through "Naïve Pig Fuckers" and right into "No End." This gloomy opus will send you into your most suicidal slump ever! Read this: "This massive rash of desperation happening across the globe / It's growing every generation / There is no end / More disillusioned every day / The problem won't just disappear / Unless some attitudes are changed / But will they? Fuckin' A! Side two continues the violent onslaught with "Earplugs Are Not Enough" and "Rock n' Roll Toilet Bowl." Fucking brilliant!

KERMIT'S FINGER – "Do the Panic" CD (Poorest Quality)

The KERMIT'S FINGER *"What I Don't Know"* CD has some of the meanest punk rock east of the Mississippi! These Boston maniacs come out slamming with "Do the Panic." KERMIT'S FINGER romp through "Nicotine" and "Reddo Giddeon" and then drop the hammer on you with "Running on Empty." Good shit! That partially prepares you for the shock and awe scorcher "What I Don't Know." Fuckin' brutal! After "Shut Up" and "One More Beer," KERMIT'S FINGER reduces your pathetic world to ashes with "This Is What I Wanted." Great!

RITES – "Death of the Party" EP (Gloom)

Those vicious punks from Edison, New Jersey, the RITES put out an amazing 7" EP this year! The popular Gloom Records has dropped the motherfucking anvil on you with the *Death of the Party* seven–song EP. By now you punks are surely familiar with the RITES output on DeadAlive Records from Philadelphia. The RITES songs on the new Gloom Records EP include "Nothing to Show For It," "Come Get It," "I'll Sleep When I'm Dead," "Overthought It," "Picked Clean," "Just Try," and a cover of "High Time" by Indiana punk legends ZERO BOYS. A song that captures some of THE RITES quest for vengeance is "Just Try It." Read this bitter rant: "I won't try and keep it a secret from you / I'll just stab you in the front / You blame me cause you started slipping / You know damn well that I'm not the guilty one / You think you're crazy / that I should be worried / I stole everything from you / I want blood and I want it from you." This EP is full of great punk rock with solid rock 'n' roll underpinnings. Get it!

BRODY'S MILITIA / NO VALUE – split EP (Rescued From Life)

Fuckin' A!!! Ohio's secret weapon, BRODY'S MILITIA, is back with a bang this year! The raw punk sounds that originate in Mount Orab come blistering out of your speakers on the new split EP with NO VALUE. This EP features seven mind–shattering blasts of primal punk bile from BRODY'S MILITIA. Fuck yes! NO VALUE from Tokyo, Japan turns in four journeyman punk tunes on side B of this split. For your copy write to Rescued from Life Records, PO Box 14821, Halton City, Texas 76117, USA.

SELFISH – "Cause Pain" 12" (Feral Ward)

SELFISH, those well respected thrash kings from Finland, have a six–song 12" on Feral Ward for you headbangers. Sugi, from Japan, gives you amazing cover art as always. SELFISH bludgeons you with some of the hardest of all current hardcore! All the songs are filled with amazing guitar and drums. The singer shouts out his frustration with the bleak world we live in. Fuck yes!

JONATHAN FLOYD

A–LINES – "You Can Touch" LP (Sympathy For The Record Industry)

This record is a perfect blend of pop, garage, and punk. The A–LINES might be the best project yet to come from a former HEADCOATEES member.

HARD SKIN – "Same Meat, Different Gravy" LP (Hermit)

The humor of Wat Tyler and some of the best Oi! around. The second record may be better than the first.

TEENAGE BOTTLEROCKET – "Total" LP (Red Scare)

Ramones-core lives in Wyoming as this four piece delivers one gem of an LP.

CAREER SUICIDE – "Invisible Eyes" 12" (Feral Ward)

I am sure a lot of list will have the Regulations LP, but did those Swede's give us a song as good as "Bored, Bored, Bored"? I think not. This 12" gets lots of repeated spins.

JOHN WILKES BOOZE – "Heliocentric Views" LP (St Ives)

Free jazz blues punk?! I don't know what to call this, but it rocks!

GRABASS CHARLESTONS – "Ask Mark Twain" 12" (No Idea)

If "Bored, Bored, Bored" isn't the best song on a 12" this year, than that honor belongs to "Atlanta Is A Cocaine Town." This record is definitely one of the best party records of the year.

SWING DING AMIGOS – "Kings of Culo" LP (Recess)

This is the 2006 spastic dance-along-to record of the year.

LAGWAGON – "Resolve" LP (Fat Wreck Chords)

I work at Fat and can honestly say in a year where I thought four or five of our releases could have been on this list, LAGWAGON released a record that made that selection easy. A record for those who have ever lost a friend they cherished.

KING KHAN & BBQ SHOW – s/t LP (Goner)

Okay, so somehow this record never got reviewed in *MRR*. This is an oversight that I will correct right now. KING KHAN used to play in the SPACESHITS and BBQ also used to be in the SPACESHITS plus LOS SEXAREENOS, Together the two solo projects (one-man bands) combine to form one hell of a record. Lo–fi and soulful, a car–crash of punk stompers, and good 'ol rock 'n' roll. This may be my favorite record of them all.

ERGS! – "Jerseys Best Prancers" 12"

Another record that hasn't been reviewed here yet, but it is still coming. Really I think the ERGS might have been my band of the year. Fucking brilliant SST/Cruz records feel with—dare I say—a touch of SQUIRRELBAIT.

Top 10 7":
BEAT BEAT BEAT – "Cheap Time" (Douchemaster)
MOTHBALLS – "Come Out of the Closet" (Car Hole)
OBSERVERS – "Walk Alone" (Johnny Cat)
DIRECT CONTROL – "Nuclear Tomorrow" (Sorry State)
DEREK LYN PLASTIC – "Plastic Surgery" (Floridas Dying)
PEDESTRIANS – "Flag of Yesterday" (Southkore)
MARKED MEN – "Nothing Changes/She Won't Know" (Shit Sandwich)
ANGRY ANGLES – "Things Are Moving" (Shattered)
CARBONAS – "Waiting To Happen" (Shattered)
VICIOUS – "Suicidal Generation" (Wasted Sounds)
DIGGER AND THE PUSSYCATS – "Card Shark Annie" (P.Trash)

Top 6 Splits:
DAN PADILLA / CHINESE TELEPHONES 7" (Fast Crowd)
ANNALISE / THREE MINUTE MOVIE – 7" (Snuffy Smile)
ALTAIRA / BLOTTO – 7" (Snuffy Smile)
WESTERN ADDICTION / NEW MEXICAN DISASTER SQUAD 12"
ERGS / MODERN MACHINES – 7"
DEAN DIRG / HENRY FIATS OPEN SORE – 7"

Top 3 Reissues/Collections:
DIRTBOMBS – "If You Didn't Already Have a Look" (In The Red)
WRANGLER BRUTES – "Tape" LP (X-Mist)
ÁS MERCANERIAS – "Beginning of the End of the World" LP (Soul Jazz)

Top Live Show: The Fest

Best *MRR* column: Mantooth's column on Woods Porn.

Top 4 CD-only Releases:
FOUR LETTER WORD – "Like Moths to Flame" CD (Newest Industry)
AMATEUR PARTY – "Sounds and Halls to House Them" CD (Cheap Art)
LA PLEBE – "Entre Cerveza Ritmo, y Emocion" CD (Desarme)
LATTERMAN – "No Matter Where We Go" CD (Dim Mak)

Top zine besides MRR: *Razorcake*

TIM BROOKS

As with the past couple of years the quantity of really top–notch releases has gone down to be replaced by a glut of mediocre releases. What was good, however, was as good as anything that has come before. I could easily have done a top 30 or releases you should buy immediately. But here's ten absolute must haves for 7"s and long players… in no particular order:

7"s:
SOVIET VALVES – "Sight That Harms" 7" EP (SmartGuy)
This will be reviewed this year but I got it last year so it makes it in. Total blindside from Australia, never heard of them until Allan pointed me in their direction. I've barely made it to side two as the title track is song of the year for me—like the very best of the WIPERS, WIRE, and TV PERSONALITIES. Just fantastic, can't imagine how good a full-length would be.

BOXED IN – "Distance" EP (Heartfirst)
Bunch of jaded old fuckers from Blighty bringing the fucking noise. Harder than any of the youngsters around these days. Viva UKHC.

FUCKED UP – "Generation" EP (Deranged)
Of course. They had to make it…the saviours of modern hardcore. All their shit is amazing, take your pick. Split my head open watching them earlier this year, nice.

MARKED MEN – "Nothings Changed/She Won't Know" (Shit Sandwich)
What the fuck is up with Mitch Cardwell? These Texans *rule*.

SMALLTOWN / PRACTICE – split EP (Snuffy Smile)
Smalltown is one of the best bands of the decade — SLF/CHORDS worship from Sweden, they blow away the PURPLE HEARTS with their version of "Jimmy." They played here and were even better live.

SKITKIDS – "Valkomna Till Paradiset" EP (540)
Hands down the best Scandinavian single this year, just the right mix of abrasive hardcore and melody.

OBSERVERS – "Walk Alone" EP (Johnny Cat)
That song is as good as any punk song ever written. They will be sorely missed.

DIRECT CONTROL – "Nuclear Tomorrow" EP (Sorry State)
Fuck me if it isn't the JERRYS KIDS reincarnated! Along with FUCKED UP and CAREER SUICIDE they are one of the best North American hardcore bands.

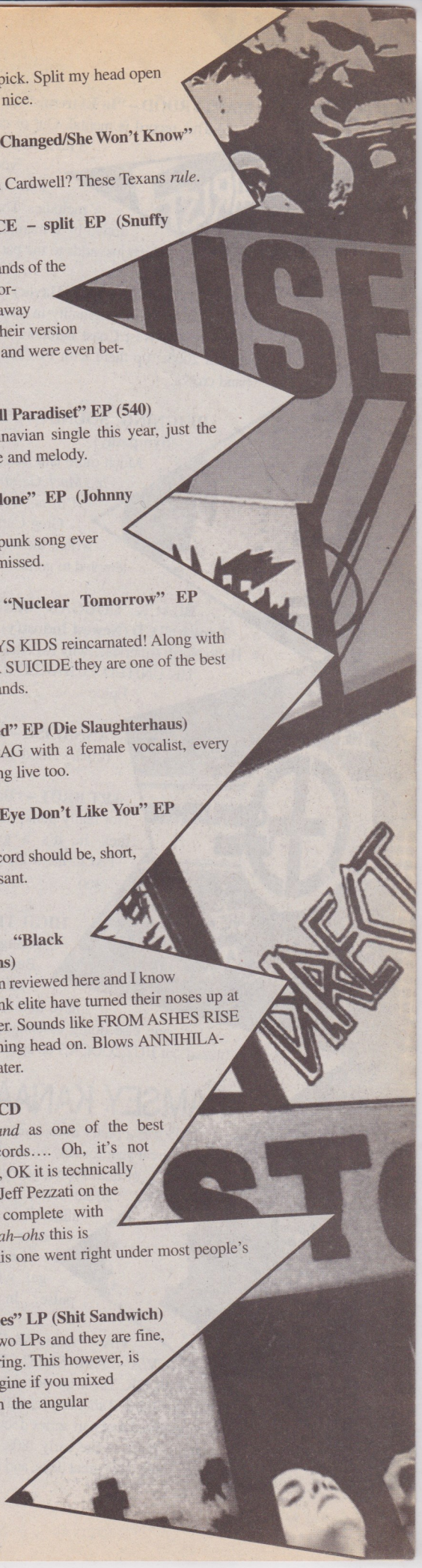
TYRADES – "Incarcerated" EP (Die Slaughterhaus)
Like a garage BLACK FLAG with a female vocalist, every release is a winner. Terrifying live too.

FINAL SOLUTIONS – "Eye Don't Like You" EP (Shit Sandwich)
Everything a good punk record should be, short, loud, and a little bit unpleasant.

LPs
DOOMRIDERS – "Black Thunder" CD (Reflections)
Don't know if this was even reviewed here and I know many of the black clad punk elite have turned their noses up at it, but it's an absolute ripper. Sounds like FROM ASHES RISE and DEEP PURPLE clashing head on. Blows ANNIHILATION TIME out of the water.

BOMB – "Indescision" CD
Up there with *Understand* as one of the best NAKED RAYGUN records…. Oh, it's not NAKED RAYGUN? OK, OK it is technically a different band but with Jeff Pezzati on the pipes and songwriting complete with soaring choruses and *woah–ohs* this is total RAYGUN baby. This one went right under most people's radars…epic.

FUSES – "Eastern Cities" LP (Shit Sandwich)
Wow, I had their other two LPs and they are fine, but nothing earth shattering. This however, is such a great record. Imagine if you mixed late 80s UK indie with the angular post punk…so good.



MARTYRDÖD – "In Extremis" LP (Havoc)
This record is mental. Out of control hardcore like SKIT-SYSTEM but with the craziest screamed vocals I've heard in a while and these mad lead guitar melodies. The cover art looks like it was drawn by a mental patient or a three-year old, which just adds to the package.

REGULATIONS – s/t LP (Havoc)
Hardly an ounce of originality in 'em but they do it so well. Late 70s/early 80s West Coast hardcore done by a bunch of Swedish kids in 2005…up there with FUCKED UP for the best hardcore band crown.

REIGNING SOUND – "Home for Orphans" LP (Sympathy)
Much more laid back than their STONES inspired *Too Much Guitar* of the previous year…in fact I'm not even sure why it got reviewed. Greg Cartwright is such a great song-writer, these songs give you the chills. I'm tempted to go into a Shane White rant but won't.

BLACK COUGAR SHOCK UNIT – "Godzilla Tripwire" CD (Newest Industry)
Hello North America…why isn't this band huge??? Ex-PANTHRO UK UNITED 13, NAKED RAYGUN meets BIG BLACK. Epic.

ANNALISE – "Heres To Hope" CD
Timeless mod–punk from the UK.

ART BRUT – "Bang Bang Rock N Roll" CD
Not really punk, maybe even on a major now but fuck it, it's a great record. Smart, cheeky FALL–lite with great hooks. Really good live too.

HIGH TENSION WIRES – "Send a Message" LP (Dirtnap)
Being that there was no MARKED MEN long player last year this will have to do—most of that band with some-one else doing essentially the same sound. Amped up, fuzzed out BUZZCOCKS on speed…great record.

RAMSEY KANAAN

2005 was a pretty decent year for reissues. It may have been a great year for new music, but I guess I must've missed lots of that. Probably cos I'm old. That's ok, the reissues listed below are mandatory, for young and old alike. That's the joy of music...and there's even a couple of actual new records on the list too, just to prove I have a finger within gobbing distance of the pulse… In no particular order:

V/A – "Anti–War" CD (Overground)
V/A – "Anti–State" CD (Overground)
Well, OK. These are not technically reissues. They are the first two (the third, *Anti–Society*, will be out by the time you read this) in a proposed five part series documenting the glory days of British anarcho–punk in the early '80s. Take it from someone who was there—they were great days, and it produced some incredible music (and some occasionally horribly embarrassing lyrics, but there you go…you're only young once etc. etc). Lots of the famous bands, but better yet, dozens of the criminally overlooked, including many who never made it vinyl at all. Sheer brilliance, and absolutely mandatory.

SYSTEM – "...is Still Murder" CD (Overground)
My favorite live band of all the early '80s UK anarcho–punkers. They only released a couple of 7"s and an incredible demo–tape, all of which are captured here. I used to hitch all over the country (admittedly, the UK isn't very big, so this isn't as daunting as it sounds) following them around on tour.

DOA – "War on 45" CD (Sudden Death)
As I got older, and there weren't many good anarcho–punk bands left, I used to go and see every DOA show in the UK, every time they toured. Though maturity brought access to motorized vehicles, which meant I could drive to shows, drive back the same night, and be back at work the next morning. I still do (well, in California now). Never seen a bad DOA show. This eight-track 12" was originally released in 1982, and is a wonderful classic, the third in the triumvirate that included *Something Better Change* and *Hardcore 81*. The reissue has ten more DOA anti–war anthems, culled from the last 20 years...

SCREECHING WEASEL – "Anthem for a New Tomorrow"CD (Asian Man)
Asian Man, bless 'em, have seen fit to re–release the entire Screeching Weasel catalog. No new tracks, though all re–mastered, with some excellent new liner notes. The band, and me, agree that this is their pinnacle. But I recommend all their records. If you don't believe me, you could always invest first in:

SCREECHING WEASEL – "Weasel Mania" CD (Fat Wreck)
It's a greatest hits. And is really great...

PROPAGANDHI – "Potemkin City Limits" CD(Fat Wreck)
America's best band (well, after the WEAKERTHANS and NOFX) are back, and sounding good. Especially if you like RUSH. The pissed, snotty, fuck–you lyrics with a heart (and brain) are some of their best yet.

AMY RAY – "Prom"CD (Daemon)
Dunno if this was reviewed in *MRR*, but it ought to have been. The best half of the INDIGO GIRLS on her second 'solo' record lays down some of the best punk, rock, and folk you'll hear, on her own indie label.

UTAH PHILLIPS – "Starlight on the Rails" CD (AK Press)
Yup, I was involved in releasing this, but the old man is a fuck of a lot more punk than virtually anyone you care to mention. He's 70. And still pissed, political, active, teller of tales, and writer of some inspirational tunes. This is a four CD career retrospective box set type thing. It's really good. If AGAINST ME! can get reviewed in *MRR*, then the genuine article—real folk and roots music—should be too.

V/A – "Take Penicillin Now" (G7 Welcoming Committee)
The latest sampler (including lots of unreleased stuff) from perhaps thee most important label around. Includes tracks from bands that could've made it onto this top ten, including GREG MACPHERSON, WEAKERTHANS (well, if they put out a new record, they'd have been in this top ten, but, er, they didn't), INTERNATIONAL NOISE CONSPIRACY (who did put out an excellent new record, except, er, it's on a major label, so can't be listed) and PROPAGANDHI (who did make it!).

Some other great records that came out, but which are not in the top ten, but I guess would be top 11 and 12 and 13:

BAMBIX – "Club Matuchek" CD (Go Kart Europe)
WESTERN ADDICTION – "Cognicide"CD (Fat Wreck)
CHUMBAWAMBA – "A Singsong And Scrap" CD (Edel)

GOLNAR NIKPOUR

LPs & 12"s:

1. LOOK BACK AND LAUGH – 12" (Lengua Armada)
Really, LBAL has to be seen to be believed, but this 12" comes pretty close to fully revealing their live gospel: visceral, angry, and authoritative. I don't have to say any more; this band speaks for themselves.

2. SELFISH – "Cause Pain" 12" (Feral Ward)
Possibly the most gratifying (if not gratuitously over the top) record of any on my list, *Cause Pain* is Japanese HC worship taken to the extreme, to the point where it seems like there is no other way to play. If there were a hardcore top 40, "I Want to Feel Some" would have had a stranglehold on the top spot all year.

3. LEBENDEN TOTEN – "State Laughter" 12" (Wicked Witch)
Under all of the layers and layers of noise, there are actually catchy songs here—hey, kinda like DISORDER!

4. HARD SKIN – "Same Meat, Different Gravy" LP (Hermit)
Forget that this is from the end of December '04 (I think the domestic pressing is from '05 so I feel justified having this sneak in), HARD SKIN put out the anthem record of the year. Fat Bob, I am yours!

5. PEDESTRIANS – "Future Shock" LP (Residue)
Thoughtful Chicagoan punk rock that is at once melodic as it is aggressive. This record has a bunch of little guitar parts that will just not get themselves out of my head; I'll be waiting for my coffee at the place around the corner and find myself humming something, and invariably it'll be the PEDESTRIANS. One question: what the fuck is up with the cover art?

6. GIANT HAYSTACKS – "Blunt Instrument" 12" (Mistake)
There are still bands that are not satisfied by the paint-by-numbers school of punk, but not content to just throw in the towel and let apathy or cynicism take over. GIANT HAYSTACKS is one of those bands, playing weirdo SST influenced punk that is both critical and hopeful, both dark and light, and appeals to perpetual underdogs both young and old alike.

7. DECONDITIONED – "Where Am I" 12" (Beginning Era)
This one slipped in under a lot of folks' radars, and it probably would have mine too if I didn't work here and have the luxury of listening to everything that comes through. I think the title of the record is a nod to VOID, which makes sense 'cause DECONDITIONED plays a similarly crazy, spastic, and falling apart brand of hardcore punk. Some people hear the term "arty hardcore" and go screaming for the hills, and for the most part I can't blame them, but this record is different. I could throw out some reference points—BLACK FLAG, COLD SWEAT, 1st LP-era DIE KREUZEN—but let those serve as a way to recommend this record rather than pigeon hole it.

8. INEPSY – "City Weapons" LP (Feral Ward)
A party of a punk rock 'n' roll record, and even better than the first LP. Very, very good.

9. MARTYRDÖD – "In Extremis" LP (Havoc)
Heavy kang with searing, intense guitar melodies and countermelodies that keeps this band more memorable than their modern Swedish hardcore brethren.

10. BLACK LIPS – "In Bloom" LP (In the Red)
I have been buying BLACK LIPS records since the first one, waiting for something to strike me as much as that first single, and this LP is finally that record. The nasty, snotty vocals are still present over a more pronounced psychedelic pop-jangle element. I bet they still puke all over the place and fall all over themselves whenever they play live, so I am not worried about any overblown sense of "maturity."

7" EPs:

1. OBSERVERS – "Walk Alone" EP
What can I say, this band is really *that* good. I made it to PDX to see their last show, and it was amazing—hundreds of kids singing along to every word, stage diving off of every available surface, mobbing the singer before the set was though. Maybe this band had another great record in 'em, but I am glad to remember them by the song "Walk Alone" and by that last show. Sigh.

2. SKATE KORPSE – "I'm Down" EP (DSK)
Where did this come from? The first record by this band was alright, but this gem of an EP—only two hundred pressed, supposedly—sounds like a lost ADOLESCENTS demo or, even better, like simple, unpretentious punk rock from any era.

3. MARKED MEN – "Nothing's Changed / She Won't Know" 45 (Johnny Cat)
"She Won't Know" is the pop song of the year, and a shoe-in to go on the first mix tape I make to celebrate when summer finally arrives, sandwiched somewhere between "My Baby's Book" by the REAL KIDS and the "Don't Go" by the RAMONES.

4. KYKLOOPPIEN SUKUPUUTO – (Mercy Mercy/Kamaset Levyt)
My favorite current Finnish hardcore band. Also, my current favorite band name to attempt to (mis)pronounce, nudging NEUROOTTISET PELIMANNIT out of the top spot on both counts.

5. DIRECT CONTROL – "Nuclear Tomorrow" (Sorry State)
This newest EP or the LP, take your pick—both were top ten contenders. Perhaps *the* band playing the punk du jour style of early *Boston Not LA* styled HC.

6. PERSEVERE – "Sex Tracks" (Insane World)
This band almost gets by on sheer style alone—from fashion sense to artistic aesthetic to their ability to mimic the classic Finncore sound so well. It also helps that they are actually really fucking good, but you knew that already—how could a bunch of Japanese punks playing hardcore like it's Finland '83 *not* be good?

7. SHOOT 'EM UP – s/t 7" (Proud to Be Idiot)
With everyone and their mother proclaiming the supremacy of early Boston/DC/L.A. styled hardcore (see: REGULATIONS, CAREER SUICIDE, DIRECT CONROL, etc.), this record went strangely unnoticed. Like those bands, only more fucked up and sloppy and with probably incredibly stupid lyrics (who knows? There is happily no lyric sheet). On the Proud to be Idiot label, who are really not lying about that.

8. FUCKED UP – "Generation" EP (Slasher)
Another A-side anthem. I can't think of any other current DIY punk band that as many people as I know have tattoos of. Seriously.

9. CARBONAS – "Blackout" EP (Shattered)
In league with the CATHOLIC BOYS, the KRUNCHIES, the NIX, etc., in making garage punk exciting for the hardcore kids. Where's the LP, Mitch?

10. SIGNAL LOST – "You'll Never Get Us Down Again" EP (Prank)
SIGNAL LOST got a new drummer, started playing a little bit faster, wrote even better guitar parts, and put out a more confident record than their 2004 debut. Dark, melodic, and reminiscent of early 80s UK anarcho stuff for both the somber tone and the vocal flair; I like the faster hardcore songs on this one the best.

Reissues:
1. AS MERCENÁRIAS – "O Começo Do Fim Do Mundo" LP (Soul Jazz)
2. ATAQUE FRONTAL – EP (Burrito)
3. DIRT SHIT – "Rattenloch" EP (Frontcore)
4. MELLAKKA – 1984-1986 LP (Partners in Crime)
5. TARNFARBE – s/t LP (Assel)

RYAN WELLS

EVOLUTIONS / FATALS split EP (Kryptonite)
The FATALS are a band with plenty 'o mostly deserved hype, while the EVOLUTIONS have sort of been taken for granted over the years. It's a shame that the EVOLUTIONS' death gasps from this split EP would be so totally fantastic, I think they were finally ready to graduate to a four–song EP!!!

KNAUGHTY KNIGHTS – "Death Has Come Over Me" EP (Goner)
Remember when you weren't sure if Mick Collins was settling down into what would be his "real band," would it be the DIRTBOMBS, or BLACKTOP, or...well, here's hoping Jack Yarber's found his new semi–permanent band. It feels less like an (inspired) tossoff and more like home cookin'. Brill. The pop tunes on here make me want to sign up for a tour in Iraq: "Why We Fight!"

KNUGEN FALLER – "Inte Som Ni" EP (Wasted Sounds)
These guys are mining not *KBD*, but instead their own native *Bloodstains* punk history that is represented on those Euro comps that most Americans collectors had no use for when they flooded out in the mid/late 90s. This EP literally sounds like an unreleased single from 1980, back when punk bands got decent, complimentary production and *being able to fucking sing* was considered admirable. I made a polite request for a full–length dose of this stuff last year and I don't see it sitting on my desk yet. If I get pissed I'll just spook 'em, so waiting quietly, hands folded ...

LIVE FAST DIE – "Guitar Star" EP (Your Permanent)
Cheater, cheater! I'm putting this on here because it came out in December and snuck in under the reviewer radar, but this way it can be on my Top Ten now and on Mitch's next year, Double Duty Radcliffe–style. Great brainless garage punk of only the purest strain, and I'm sure they will be headlining the Dumfukpunkdrugsponge Fest in Schenectady sometime in 2006.

TIME FLYS – "Fly" LP (Birdman)
My favorite full length of the year. Definitive enough, Golnar? Riff City.

BLACK LIPS – "Let It Bloom" LP (In The Red)
My second–favorite full length of the year. In general, my tastes generally dictate that modern records that exceed 20 minutes are stuffed with filler, but if people are going to start taking their bands fucking seriously and truly respect what they produce then we will have more LPs like this one, and fewer LPs with a good four–song EP amidst the tossoffs. Sniff!

TYRADES – "On Your Video" EP (SmartGuy)
Some were struck by the "slow" A–side, and so was I. Fan–fucking–tastic sez I. This vocalist here, see, she sounds revelatory wrapping her tonsils around a Four Minute Man, so let's hear more of this, then, right? Time for another LP, let's go people!

MYSTERY GIRLS – "Under My Tongue" EP (Kryptonite)
Never been 100% sold on these guys before, in that they could put out a disc that easily makes a monthly Top Ten, but at playoff time there's just too much quality pitching and they are exiled to the bench. Well, they're bringing the "high" heat on this EP, it almost snuck past me but a late swing gets the job done too. This is the primo psych–out punk jamz that too many lysergic folk bores are aiming for. How about a live 12" of *this* shite boys?

FRUSTRATION – "Artists Suck" 12" (Born Bad)
If KNUGEN FALLER is digging through neglected 1980 Euro punk sounds, then these guys from Gay Paree are re–creating the contemporaneous Land Rush to stake out claims in post–punk territory in the wakes of THROBBING GRISTLE (et al) and, say, the old Zick Zack label. Ha, the joke was on them in the end, the Punk Amoeba absorbed their asses as well as evidenced by this vaulting achievement in sound. VOLT, another French combo, is also walking this chilly beat for the Scene Police, and between the two of them I can't see their collective 2006 being anything but a dour, rain–soaked evening at the local Zwingers's Club...with the power cut. And they stepped over crime scene tape to get there. Oh, bother. Where Americans are the only people who can honestly rip off a record like this year's NIX EP, only Europeans can really pull off this type of burnt–out–cigarette–blues with true anti–passion. Perhaps if the US loses a million dead in a war with Iran or North Korea, then dwells on it for fifty years, perhaps then we can pull off records like FRUSTRATION.

REBEL – "Prawns" LP (Junior Aspirin)
Honestly, I just can't get enough of this asshole's singing and lyrics. I could've put the COUNTRY TEASERS' *Live* CD here as well, considering they are bookends to each other. If you can stand an occasional "bleep–bloop" in your musical diet, then dust your cereal with this excreta.

Reissues:
ICKY BOYRFRIENDS – "A Love Obscene" 2xCD (Menlo Park)
THOUGHT CRIMINALS "Chrono–Logical" 2xLP (Ascension)
TAR BABIES – "Face the Music" CD (Lexicon Devil)
KARATE PARTY – "Black Helicopter" LP (S–S)
PRIMITIVE CALCULATORS – s/t CD (Chapter Music)
BASSHOLES – "Broke Chamber Music" CD
V/A – "Staring Down the Barrel" LP (Booty)

SEAN DOUGAN

Well, here's another yearly round up of my big top ten hard hitters, the ones that clocked my imaginary bill board top forty. Not an outstanding year by any standards but still enough to fill the Christmas stocking full of festive cheer. Well here it goes not really in any order, sort of, I think.

THE PONYS – "Celebration Castle" (In the Red)
A band that just won't fit, not quite punk, not quite indie, and owes as much to ECHO AND THE BUNNYMEN as they do THE WIPERS. More jingle and pop on this second one, the PONYS are a band that embraces the individual spirit, and fucks the punk rock party line.

FRUSTRATION – "Artists Suck" CDEP (Born Bad)
Cold wave that's what the press release says, and that's what I feel when listening to these French shoe gazers. Big hints of WARSAW, CRISIS, and THE WIPERS. Bring on the long play.

HIGH TENSION WIRES – "Send A Message" LP (Dirtnap)
With such a rich pedigree—the REDS and the MARKED MEN to name a couple—you knew you were on a cert. Full of BUZZCOCKS melody with wreckless doses of garage. All hail to Texas.

FUSES – "Eastern Cities" LP (Shit Sandwich)
Capturing the essence of inner city decay, as once mastered by THE MOB, some of the grim and grit of the THE FALL, with the melody of a more direct MISSION OF BURMA. Their third LP and best.

MANIKIN – "Still" LP (Super Secret)
A band that has come leaps and bounds from their slightly all over the place beginnings. Firmly rooted in the JOY DIVISION school of art punk with heavy hints of the bleakness of ZOUNDS.

REGULATIONS – "Electric Guitar" LP (Havoc)
Young school doing old school, ex-ETA from Sweden, sounding a hell of a lot like BLACK FLAG, MINOR THREAT, and THE CIRCLE JERKS all in one. The first two EPs and seven new tracks of some of the best straight up punk rock you'll hear all year.

MARKED MEN – "Nothing's Changed" EP (Shit Sandwich)
Two tracks of perfect pop. Garage punk bursting with hooks, energy, and pure adrenaline.

AS MERCENÁRIAS – "O Comeco do Fim do Mundo" (Soul Jazz)
Soul Jazz unearthing more gems. This time from Brazil, with an early eighties girl band, stumbling across the perfect post punk formula, all the energy of GANG OF FOUR, with the sharp poke of WIRE.

MISUNDERSTOOD – "Lost Acetates 65-66" LP (Ugly Things)
I love this band; "Children Of The Sun" is a psychedelic masterpiece. These lost treasures show the bands more raucous r'n'b side, raw, and full of garage punk hints of what was yet to come.

OBSERVERS – "Walk Alone" EP (Johnny Cat)
Sort of the swan song of possibly one of the best ever punk bands, period. Jagged and dangerous, sounding old while still sounding new, the singalong appeal hitting the roof. It's a sadder place without them.

GIANT HAYSTACKS – "Blunt Instrument" 12" (Mistake)
Local boys and their take on post-punk art damage. The only difference is that they owe as much to THE JAM as they do to WIRE.

Honorable mentions: **BLACK COUGER SHOCK UNIT – *Godzilla Trip Wire* LP, THE STABILIZERS – *Evil Panic* EP, TO WHAT END –*Concealed Below The Surface* LP, TYRADES – *Incarcerated* EP, FUCKED UP – *Generation* EP, BOTTLES AND SKULLS/LOPEZ – EP, FINAL SOLUTIONS – *My Love Is Disappointing* EP, GRABASS CHARLESTONS – *Ask Mark Twain* LP, EMERGENCY – *1234* LP, REAL LOSERS – *Don't Leave Me Now* EP, DOOMRIDERS – *LP***

WILL KINSER

It's been a crazy year for me consumed by recording, traveling, touring, and everything else that gets in the way of sitting down and listening to a new record. I don't think I really have a total overview of what came out. I did however go to a crap load of shows, so this list seems to represent more live bands I saw this year than a definitive vinyl analysis. I will keep it short for this reason.

1. CAUSTIC CHRIST – "Government Job" EP (Havoc)
Well, how do I put this? CAUSTIC CHRIST is the best fucking band in the USA right now! They play perfect straightforward hardcore punk rock, with no frills, no hesitation, and no hype (unlike so many other bands that people will no doubt worship in the top 10 this year). It's simple, the songs are classic with lyrics delivered with intensity and venom, the guitar work is as incredible as any band Bill Chamberlin has been in, the rhythm section compliments the overall sound perfectly. You can't go wrong with songs as ferocious and witty as "Doesn't Anyone Want to Impress Jodie Foster Anymore" or title track "Government Job." Perfect overall.

2. INEPSY – "City Weapons" LP (Feral Ward)
I don't have to explain anything, but MOTÖRHEAD, VENOM, MOB 47, and DISCHARGE all rolled into one great record. Rock'n'roll played by unrelenting punx.

3. UNKIND – "Ei Mitään" LP (Combat Rock Industry)
I can't give UNKIND enough credit for transforming there sound into a perfect onslaught of heavy hardcore, passing the limits of TRAGEDY wannabe bands, and delving into there own unique sound. If you listen to this and don't like it, you have problems.

4. STRUNG UP – "Warfucked" EP (Tank Crimes)
Bay Area locals give us the goods. Perfect '80s style hardcore with all the elements of classic bands such as SOCIAL UNREST or CODE OF HONOR, and yet they still have something to contribute to the sound without being too retro. Extra praise to Dan's amazing leads on this record.

5. SKITKIDS – "Valkomna Till Paradiset" EP (540)
SKITKIDS! Yes they are best band to come out of SWEDEN in quite some time. Think of TOTALITÄR with solos that are so over the top they will make you think you are listening to a VAN HALEN record...well, at least a DEATHSIDE record.

6. STORMCROW – "Enslaved in Darkness" LP (No Options)
I know I am going to get shit for this, but who cares if I put out their fucking record! STORMCROW plays brutal crust that takes elements from BOLT THROWER, AMEBIX, and DEVIATED INSTINCT, and just do it right. If you like crust this is the record of the year.

7. BURIAL – "Never Give Up. Never Give In" 12" (Instigate/La Vida Es Un Mus/Hate)
BURIAL, although not the most original band I have ever heard, seem to transcend the barriers of a complete

Japanese hardcore copy band, and write great hardcore songs. Again they have over the top leads that seem to be a trademark of punk this year, but what can I say, I am a sucker for this stuff. Memorable and as harsh as any old punk classic.

8. CCSS – "Commun Chfeu Sa Soupe" EP (Ugly Pop)
For those of us who have felt there is a huge lack of punk rock bands out there (I mean real punk, not crust, hardcore, screamo, or any other sub–genre), CCSS brought spiky hair pogo punk with a true DIY spirit back with a vengeance. Fuck off Punkcore; this is real punk with in your face lyrics, trashy guitar and bass, and dead on 4/4–backbeat drumming. I only hope that more bands that are this punk start popping up all over in the DIY scene.

9. DIRECT CONTROL – "You're Controlled" LP (Kangaroo)
Once upon a time there was a little band from Illinois called NAKED HIPPY who played perfect early '80s American hardcore in a time when it was not popular to play that sort of thing, and therefore they went strangely unnoticed. Sometime in the late '90s people started appreciating the greatness of this sound again, but by this time, well, NAKED HIPPY were now gone forever. Luckily, DIRECT CONTROL has mastered the perfect sound of American Hardcore and with a little influence from the HIPPY has put out a masterpiece that leaves other bands who try for hardcore greatness in the dust of their circle pit. A happy ending?

10. OBSERVERS – "Walk Alone" EP (Jonny Cat)
Everyone else here is going to have this on their Top 10, and what can I say, I agree with them that this band rocks. I can't wait to hear their new projects.

There were a lot more records I could have put on this list but these ones where at the top of the page and I'm really sick, and too lazy to go searching through all the notes. Here some more off the top of my head:

HUMAN BASTARD – "War of Lords" EP
THE TOTAL END – "Stolen in the Night" EP
CROPKNOX – "Do What" EP
DETONATORS – "Sonic Manifesto" EP
SELFISH – "Cause Pain" 12"

Top Live bands: **PELIGRO SOCIAL, CAUSTIC CHRIST, SKITKIDZ, BEHIND ENEMY LINES, CCSS, WITCH HUNT, BURIAL, AFTER THE BOMBS, STATE OF FEAR, AOS, LIMP WRIST, THE RESTARTS, SIGNAL LOST.**

ARIEL AWESOME

OBSERVERS – "Walk Alone" EP
The best song of the best band of the year is on this EP. "Walk Alone" is at once timeless and deeply tied to the tide of troubles we find ourselves facing now. Brilliant. I am going to miss this band so much.

CATHOLIC BOYS – "Hurt to Hate" EP
Until this release I only truly appreciated this band of Milwaukeeans live. This recording captures some, but not all of the crazed ferocity they unleash on their audiences. They are a frenzied and forceful punk with a dirty garage rock twist that I cannot seem to get enough of. Bring it.

BORN/DEAD – "Repetition/Fear" EP
It is totally astonishing to me that a band I have seen what seems like hundreds of times, that I had grown totally tired of, could in fact suddenly and inexplicably be new again. This is the best they've ever sounded and the most inspirational they've ever been. It is the same old reliable mix of fury filled mosh parts and scathing political lyrics, but it's been taken up a couple notches. I'm proud.

DIGGER AND THE PUSSYCATS – "Card Shark Annie" EP
Admittedly, this one is riding on one song ("Sergi"), but goddamn if it isn't one of the best fucking songs of the last couple years. This Australian two piece delivers a song, that like many of my other favorites, that seems as if it had been sitting in a locked vault the last twenty years. All I want is more consistently awesome songs from this band. Please.

PROJECT X – "Straight Edge Revenge" EP
Yes, not only is one of my top ten a reissue, it is *this* reissue. I guess it's time to 'fess up—I have a soft spot for classic straightedge anthems, and "Straight Edge Revenge" is the gold standard. I had given up on ever owning this on vinyl, but now life is glorious and I can afford this intensely pissed and lyrically genius record.

CLOROX GIRLS – "This Dimension" LP
My two favorite punk genres had a baby. 70s powerpop and 80s Los Angeles scum fell in love and birthed the CLOROX GIRLS just for my— and countless others'—listening enjoyment. You add the stellar bass playing (and annoying stage persona) of Colin Grigson, and you get this album that surpasses all expectation.

TOP TEN – "Never Get Enough" EP
This record got much hype in my house before its actual release, so at first I was a little disappointed when it didn't change my life forever, and cure cancer. I've given it some time and turns on the record player, and it indeed grew into one my favorite albums of recent times. The thing that really makes it for me is Tina; her voice is laced with something that makes you wanna get wasted, dance, and makeout.

TOYS THAT KILL – "Don't Take My Clone" EP
San Pedro does it again and again. This band was good last year, but fuck, this record is awesome. It is infectious and electrifying, I may start dancing just thinking about it.

LOOK BACK AND LAUGH – 12"
Another band I have the privilege of seeing really often, but have never grown tired of. This record is just like their shows, where you are treated to a consistent level of fury and rage each time. They are absolutely relentless in their delivery of incredible anger filled songs. I am positively awestruck by this band, and by Tobia's vocals in particular. Fucking amazing.

ONION FLAVORED RINGS – "Two Minutes Enlightenment" LP
This may seem like an easy pick for me, but it was actually a lot harder to admit how great this album is because of how close to it I am. There is something that Steve Funyon is doing here with these lyrics, and that they do as a band, that is at once so blithe and yet so dark and heartrending—it is really compelling. It's hard sometimes to admit being both fan and friend, but here I am.

RAY LUJAN

This seemed to be a pretty good year for my tastes. It was tough getting it down to ten as I had to cut out a couple of good hardcore acts, AK47 and DAMAGE CASE, as well as a couple bands whose members have served up some good times for me in the past, AMBER JETS and IPANEMA. It was also tough leaving out the JOHNIE 3 release, which wins the RAMONES-influenced CD of the year in my book. Reissues were not under consideration because that was then... I could have come up with a solid twenty or so but here's the top ten, in reverse order.

10. YOU SAY PARTY! WE SAY DIE! – "Hit The Floor!" CD
Think SLEATER KINNEY with keyboards from this Vancouver combo. Loose yet anthemic at times.

9. VMW – CD
Members of DAS OATH and CHARLES BRONSON did this arty dance release with noisy post punk as well some hardcore punk. Somehow it works.

8. THEY STOLE A MILLION – "The City That Day" CD
The Finnish version of SNUFF meets LEATHERFACE. Catchy songs with some decent guitar interplay that doesn't let up.

7. CADEAUX – "Physical City" CD
A Canadian band with two gals singing a mix of GANG OF FOUR, THE SLITS, and REM with a touch of Riot Grrrl.

6. ANNALISE – "Here's to Hope" CD
A well-crafted melodic punk release from these UK vets. Crackle and Boss Tuneage label fans will love their latest.

5. NEW BLACK – "Time Attack" CD
Arty post punk that rocks. PRETTY GIRLS MAKES GRAVES meets X–GIRL. Mostly gal vocals from this somewhat complex yet splendid combo.

4. COUGARS – "Pillow Talk" CD
A cool sound with a great groove that goes from BIRTHDAY PARTY to ROCKET FROM THE CRYPT and back to the PIXIES with horns in the mix. A welcome weird sound.

3. STREET BRATS – "See You At The Bottom" CD
OK, retro pop punk rockers! Solid stuff in the STIFF LITTLE FINGERS meets THE RAMONES with some power pop tendencies. Hits!

2. PROPAGANDHI – "Potemkin City Limits" CD
Lefty politics, power, and passion. You know the band and the sound. A band that matters in the popular circles. Another hardcore punk rocking release.

1. LATTERMAN – "No Matter Where We Go" CD
Hands down my favorite release of the year. Punk rock with the spirit that makes the weeding out process worth it! HOT WATER MUSIC meets FIFTH HOUR HERO done to a loose perfection.

CHRIS HUBBARD

1. DIRECT CONTROL – "You're Controlled" 12" (Kangaroo) / "Nuclear Tomorrow" EP (Sorry State)
It's hard to put my finger on exactly why this band so damn good—they just seem to have that extra level of intensity that makes these two releases instant classics. Maybe I am a bit biased since being totally blown away by the band live a couple years ago. A recent domestic release of the 12" (by No Way Records) should finally make that record more widely available over here. Do yourself a favor and check these guys out.

2. PEDESTRIANS – "Future Shock" LP (Residue)
Though this came out so recently that I have yet to track down a copy for myself, I've already listened to it a number of times and it's fucking great—head and shoulders above everything else they've recorded so far. Unique, catchy, and driving.

3. SKATE KORPSE – "I'm Down" EP (DSK)
An amazing EP that I was lucky enough to get for review my first month on the job here at *MRR*. I can't help but draw comparisons to some of the revered Danish bands from the last few years: like the YOUNG WASTENERS or NO HOPE FOR THE KIDS, SKATE KORPSE has produced a record of SoCal–influenced melodic punk that sounds totally fresh and original. If you have a copy of this EP, consider yourself lucky since allegedly only 200 were pressed.

4. STRUNG UP – "Warfucked" EP (Tank Crimes)
In a scene here in the Bay Area full of all types of hardcore bands, STRUNG UP are my favorite, with the only close competition coming from LOOK BACK AND LAUGH. Though not quite as great as their full–length from last year, this EP is solid release better than 99% of the hardcore out there today.

5. MARKED MEN – "Nothing's Changed / She Won't Know" 7" (Shit Sandwich)
The A–side of this record is an excellent garage punk song, but it's the flip, "She Won't Know," that's the real hit on this record—a total power-pop gem that gets stuck in my head for literally days at a time.

6. DEATH TOKEN – "Walking Dead Life / Manifest Junkyard" 7" (Backwards Masking)
It took a while after first hearing this 7" to really get into it, but it's definitely another winner out of Denmark. "Walking Dead Life" is an excellent dirge–y tune backed on the other side by a more traditional but still great hardcore song. A vast improvement over their first EP.

7. SIGNAL LOST – "You'll Never Get Us Down Again" EP (Prank)
SIGNAL LOST continues in the vein of their 2004 LP with this new four–song 7" EP. Another fine mix of hardcore and melodic punk, intense and urgent.

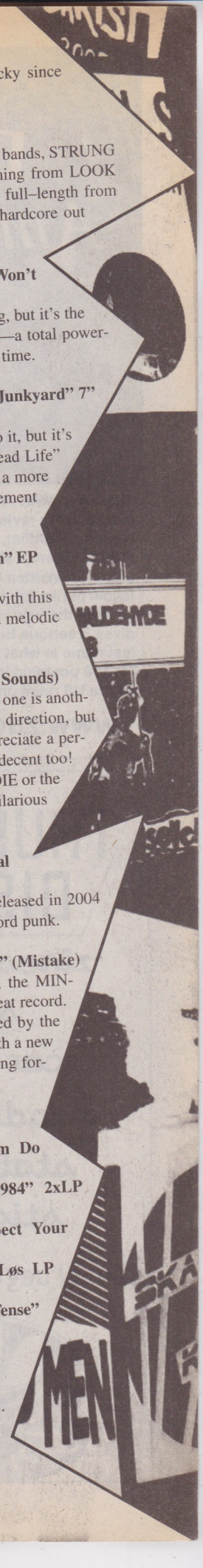
8. KNUGEN FALLER – "Inte Som Ni" EP (Wasted Sounds)
I was not overwhelmed by this band's debut EP, but this one is another story. I know a few folks who do not dig their new direction, but anyone who doesn't love the title track just cannot appreciate a perfectly crafted pop tune. The rest of the record is pretty decent too! KNUGEN FALLER is surely this generation's BLONDIE or the GO-GO'S. Extra points for the continuing theme of hilarious photos with the king of Sweden on the back cover.

9. GORILLA ANGREB – "Aborted 2000 EP" (Feral Ward)
This EP is much more straightforward than the one released in 2004 and I think it's great. Totally raw and catchy three–chord punk.

10. GIANT HAYSTACKS – "Blunt Instrument" 12" (Mistake)
Drawing influences from two of my favorite bands, the MINUTEMEN and GANG OF FOUR, is a recipe for a great record. Add just a hint of pop sensibilities seemingly inspired by the JAM (to my ears anyway) and you have a winner. With a new bass player, this band continues strong and I'm looking forward to any new output in '06.

Reissues:
1. AS MERCENÁRIAS – "O Começo Do Fim Do Mundo" LP (Soul Jazz)
2. RATTUS – "The Poko Recordings 1982–1984" 2xLP (Zurich Chainsaw Massacre)
3. TAR BABIES – "Face the Music / Respect Your Nightmares" CD (Lexicon Devil)
4. SISTE DAGERS HELVETE – Helvete Er Løs LP (Cradle to Grave)
5. SADO–NATION – "Past Present Future Tense" (Grand Theft Audio)

the end.



Thanks to MRR readers throughout the world for supporting do-it-yourself efforts and helping sell out the first edition of the book in six months! The revised new edition of this acclaimed history of the DIY punk underground features new photos of Operation Ivy, Legal Weapon, Conflict, Sick of it All, The Offenders, and Black Flag, along with added material on Arizona, Texas, San Francisco, Ohio, and Florida. There's also a greater focus on the unheralded role of women and minorities in punk rock of the era, too often ignored by other histories. Written by former punk DJ George Hurchalla, the 300 page book is held together by a personal narrative that is being lauded by fellow punks for its humor and insight in capturing the punk experience. The product of six years of interviews and research (and still going!), the new edition also features an index and a Smythe Sewn binding to hold up to repeated readings. The large 8.5 x 11 format gives it serious bulk, so it will not only punk up your coffee table, it will crush your copy of that "other" hardcore history whose author's last name is what he should do for putting out such a flawed work of misogyny, rumors, and errors. *Going Underground* is available for $18 postpaid in the USA direct from Zuo Press, $25 Canada, and $26/31 internationally for surface/airmail. Save money buying direct, as the US retail price at bookstores is $24.95.

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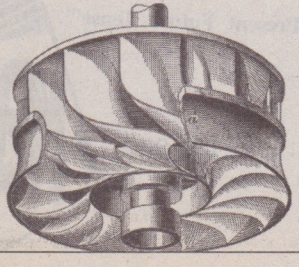

Submissions wanted for a book about American DIY groups and radical activism

We're looking for essays, comics, and interviews with and by people involved in creative resistance and radical groups and DIY scenes in the US. Roughly, we are looking for people involved with: ARA, animal liberation, feminism, genderqueer, APOC, youth liberation and freeskools,infoshops and libraries, bike collectives, newspaper and (maga)zines, squatting, radical healthcare, DIY show spaces and community centers, immigrant rights, street parties, forest defense, urban greening, free and pirate radio, unions, Food not Bombs, and prisoners' rights groups. (This list is not meant to be exclusive. If you are involved with or know about other groups, we'd love to hear about them!)We want to collect a group of writings and representations of, and by,activists from around the United States, people involved in all sorts of every day resistance. We welcome submissions by people of all genders, ethnicities, ages, sizes, and backgrounds. Submissions due May 1st, 2006.

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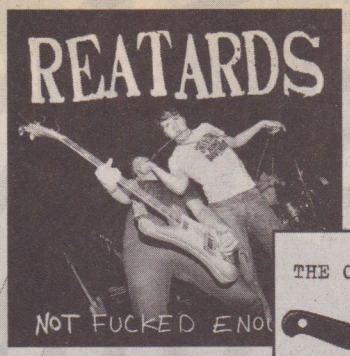

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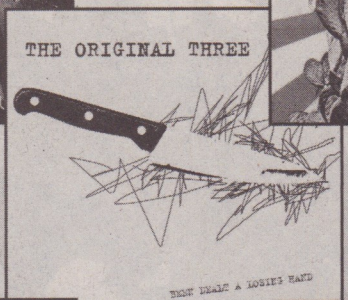
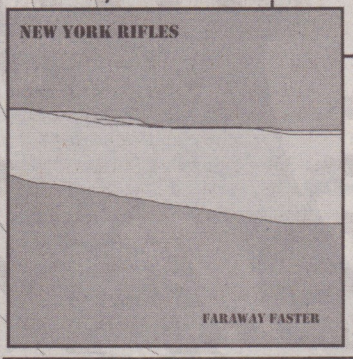


Tokyo Electron
Self Titled

New York Rifles
Far Away Faster

The Dark Skies
Out in January



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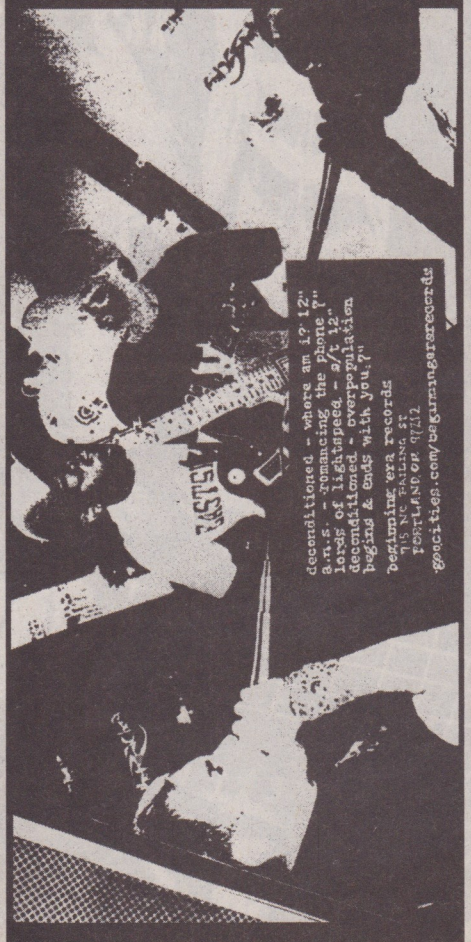

INSANE SOCIETY RECORDS

GUIDED CRADLE "s/t" digipack CD
Killer band based in Prague with two members that have roots in Portland/Scotland and Indiana and two Czechs... Rough d-beat crustcore with metal sound, mix of classic scandinavian school and UK crust/metal bands of eighties. CD contains 8 songs played with absolute exactness and easiness with bulldozer sound from Professional Sound studio. There are ex members of Dread 101, Oi Polloi, The K10 Prospect and V.I.R in the band. Vinyl out on Damage Done records...

COMA "s/t" LP
Heavy-load crustcore from Sweden. May you know them from previous splits with Born Dead Icons, Autoritar and Mass Genocide Process. Crushing fast scandicrust mixed with classic death metal riffs. 15 songs in 20 mins - oh yeah! Full colour cover design by Michael Bukowski. CD and tape on the way...

MALIGNANT TUMOUR "BURNINHELL" LP/CD/tape
Second full lenght of Czech commando - explosive mix of crust, rock´n´roll and old metal. 13 songs with precise sound recorded in SOPA studio. If you are into crust, Venom and Motörhead don´t miss this one.

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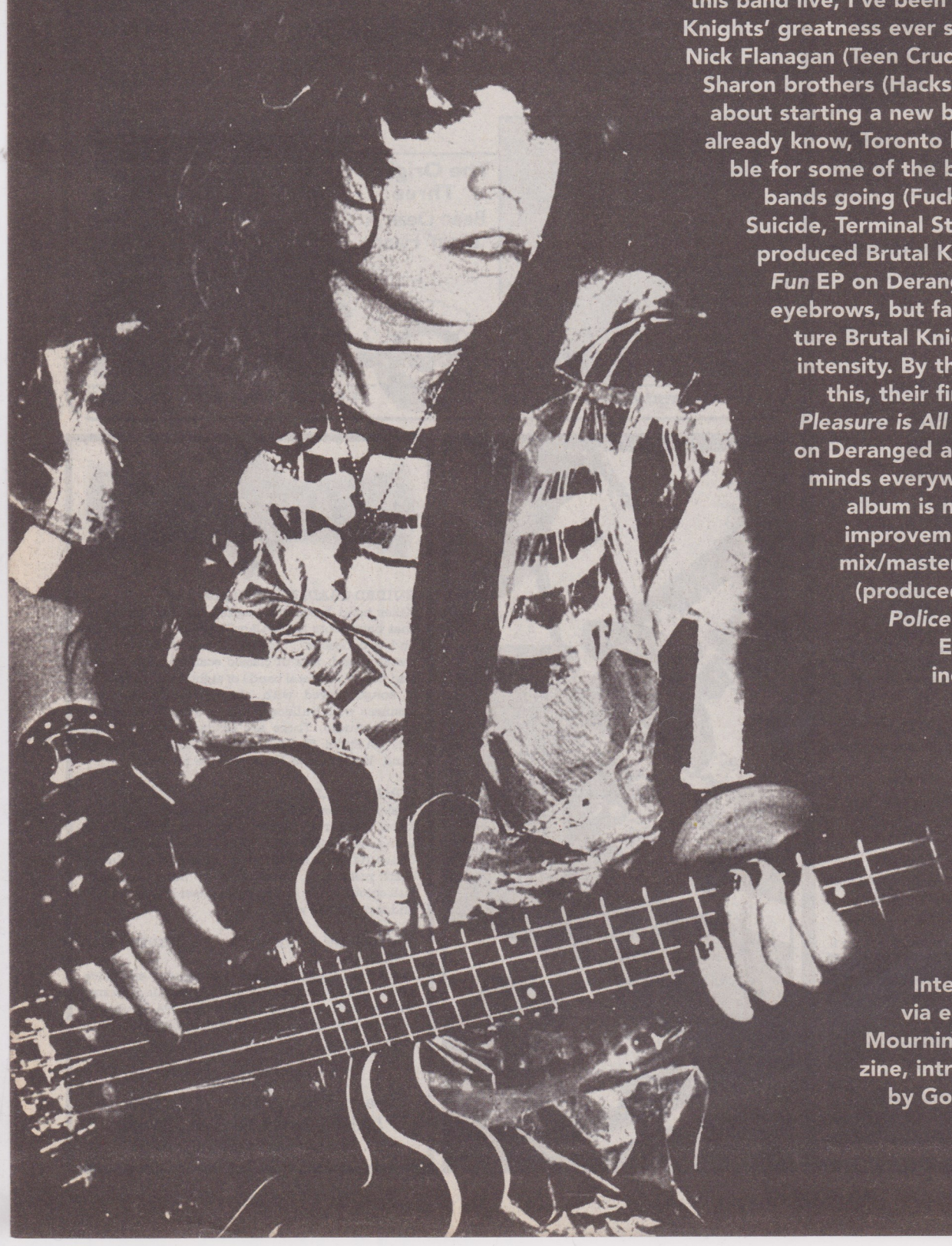
BRUTAL KNIGHTS



Like anyone else lucky enough to have seen this band live, I've been praising Brutal Knights' greatness ever since I heard that Nick Flanagan (Teen Crud Combo) and the Sharon brothers (Hacksaw) were talking about starting a new band. If you don't already know, Toronto has been responsible for some of the best current punk bands going (Fucked Up, Career Suicide, Terminal State) and now has produced Brutal Knights. Their *Not Fun* EP on Deranged raised a few eyebrows, but failed to really capture Brutal Knights' sound and intensity. By the time you read this, their first album, *The Pleasure is All Thine*, will be out on Deranged and will be blowing minds everywhere. Luckily, this album is not only a huge improvement with a solid mix/mastering by Jon Drew (produced both Fucked Up *Police* and *Generations* EPs), but it also includes the band's best material to date, making this a total shredder. I expect this will surprise most who give this record a spin. PLAY IT LOUD!

Interview conducted via email with Manel Mourning for Ring Of Fire zine, intro and submission by Gord Deranged.

MRR: Please introduce your band.
Jon Sharron (aka Randy Sharronto) plays guitar and writes the music (aka "the magic") for many Brutal Knights jamz. His awkward work in previous bands is a big reason why we are so shittily tight at music. Reason number two is drummer Matt Sharron (aka Msgezus): his two-handed drum style is unmatchable by any without the last name Lombardo or Krupa. Katie G Whittaker (aka Katie G Warrior) is a highly responsible and rich woman who has been exercising lately—so watch out fellas, because she will slap the piss off of your pissholder if you get funny and/or funky with her. Bassist Daniella Costanzo is the party animal of the band, often taking off from shows prior to our highly anticipated encores in order to attend punk raves in Montreal. She somehow has fifteen labrette piercings. Singer Nick "xflansx" Flanagan writes the lyrics and eats most of the foods, as everybody else in the band is an anorexic vegan who makes veganic exceptions strictly for pizza. We have a laissez-faire mentality.

MRR: Any of you have other bands?
Katie has Legion666 and Fonny; both are ragga bands. Jon has been jamming with The Dream Dates, a reformed 1970s punk act featuring Greg Dick. Daniella played bass in Anagram as well as Granama, but they hired a man eventually, as we will also do one day. Matt is only in this band and so is Nick, unless you count the vocals/drum duo M & N jam-out after Brutal Knights practice, which sounds like MC 900 Foot Jesus combined with Transplants, obviously.

MRR: You seem very inclined to scorn, ridicule, and provocation. Isn't that a bit against what punk is all about? Or is that what punk is all about?
Make no mistake, punk is very much about scorn, ridicule and provocation, but punk is dead, so we are like nomads in search of the lost treasure called punk. We accomplish this by acting like a bunch of douchey punks. The important thing is that we're not intelligently political. Intelligent attempts at political thinking destroyed punk rock, the same way that idiotic right wing politics destroyed rock 'n' roll. What we did is combine punk with rock 'n' roll (but not as radly as Inepsy,) and look at the bullshit it produced: our sound—our indefinable, mildly respected sound.

MRR: I don't have a copy of your new record yet, but I listened to the songs because I got them from Internet. What do you think about pirated music? I swear I will buy the LP when I get the chance...
If you agree to buy the LP, you can download all you want; just like if we agree to play a good live show for you, we can have sex with you. You can also download replicas of Brutal Knights genitals for free as well.

MRR: I saw your awesome profile at Myspace.com. What do you think about it? What do you think Myspace and Internet is good for?
We agree that our Myspace profile is awesomely radical. We think it's better than our actual band. Our sixth band member is the Internet, without it we'd be dickless.

MRR: Where the fuck is your edge?
We threw it in the garbage after Y2K rendered it obsolete, then we poured a bottle of Sparks on it.

MRR: Do you really believe in all that you sing?
Yo.

MRR: Do you think that if you express your thoughts, while trying to be honest with people, they can take it as a provocation?
I go out of my way to irritate people when writing my lyrics, so I think they should take it as me trying to provoke them. At the same time, they should also not take it so seriously and keep being douchebags, so I can continue to have stuff to write lyrics about.

MRR: Which bands were you thinking about when you wrote "Garbage Tunes?"
Every single band ever, and especially the ones I am or have been in. Music is great, but it's also selfish, boring and shitty—except for Gandhi's band. They were called Proper Gandhi, and they went from town to town peacefully feeding the needy while playing irritatingly influential melodic political bhangra (really is there any other kind?).

MRR: Let's talk about music. Which are your biggest influence? What are you thinking about when you write the lyrics?
I think about what is up with my life when I sit down to write lyrics. Like, why is it so shitty? So then I write a song decrying and vilifying, yet also celebrating, the shittiness I feel. It's what I like to call the "grunge with a dash of Oprah" approach. Lyrical precedents were made by the acts The Moistboyz and Kool Keith.

MRR: I think you're from Ontario, right? How's the relation with the rest of your city's bands?
We also think we're from Ontario, too. We are friends with lots of Toronto bands. They are all great. Except for all of them.

MRR: Do you guys tour a lot? Are you ever going to go to Europe?
We play Montreal all the time because it's such a fun place to play. We went to the West Coast of the USA in February 2004 and played some shows with Western Dark, as well as some with Fucked Up. We like to tour and play shows for fans that go ass-mental, but keep in mind we cry when we play, so expect to see that. We would love to go to Europe and Japan, and spread our message of pissing on rules.

MRR: Future plans?
Another record, a truck filled with straight edge money, our own garden (Brutal Knights National Cooze Garden), touring in four buses, and better fucking.

MRR: What's the worst show you've ever played?
Well, we have two types of worst shows. Those that are the worst for us, and those that are the worst for the audience. There are also ones that are worst for everybody. I guess that's what you're referring to. Our first show was probably awful and overly garage-y. Then, one time, we played a show for *Vice* whereat we sucked and ate gross pizza and the crowd was a bunch of walking, talking blackberries. That also sucked. One time we were supposed to play in Portland, but the band traveling with us cancelled the show and we showed up to nothing. That also was the worst.

MRR: Any last comments?
What is there left to say? We want to put out more albums. We have new songs that are about the same things our old songs are about, and we hope you like them. But most other bands should just stop.

New Brutal Knights *The Pleasure is All Thine* LP/CD out now on DERANGED. Upcoming West Coast tour and European tour in 2006. contact Brutal Knights via:

www.brutalknights.com
www.derangedrecords.com

Kansan Uutiset

ROCK-O-RAMA SP
HARDCORE INTERN

Kansan Uutiset is one of the best Finnish bands ever. They were angry young men who wanted to destroy normality, playing raw, fast and furious punk. Interview, history, and introduction by Markku H.

MRR: Kansan Uutiset (which translates as "News to the People") was and still is the name of the Communist newspaper in Finland. Did you really take the name from the newspaper?

Ökky: No, it doesn't mean the paper. We just wanted to spread the news to all the citizens, we wanted to deliver a message of our own. It had nothing to with that paper. Jimmy came up with the name. We didn't really have a clear agenda of our own, but we wanted to be there for the people and give them our own message, which wasn't very clear sometimes. I don't think our songs about cannabis were really in line with that official newspaper.

MRR: Let's start from the beginning—when and what was your introduction to punk?

Ökky: That was in 1977. For me it all started from the Sex Pistols, which is not a huge surprise or anything...

MRR: But that was not the beginning of your musical career...

Ökky: When I started to play music, I started with metal stuff, before there was any punk at all. Of course I played all the songs by Black Sabbath, Deep Purple, Led Zeppelin, and all those bands. I started to play when I was around ten years old, in the early 1970s. My sister wanted a guitar and got one, but she never wanted to learn how to play. So, I had a guitar waiting for me and I started to play it. At that time, I played all those heavy metal songs by myself. So I guess I was playing music even before the whole punk thing happened, but when I first heard the Sex Pistols, I was hooked in a second. I thought that music had some real balls in it! That was all it took and I've stuck with it. Though I am still listening to metal stuff quite a bit, and of course Motörhead, but that's not metal. Motörhead is a unique phenomena, it's a chapter in a music history by itself.

MRR: Did you have any bands before you were in all these punk bands?

Ökky: It's about 30 years or so from those times. So let me think... The first band that I had a gig with was in 1979, and of course the gig was at Lepakko, it was just squatted. **[MRR: Lepakko indeed was a very legendary place in the Finnish punk scene. It was first squatted in the spring of 1979, and in 1999 it had its farewell gig. The whole building has been torn down since, now there are some ugly office buildings, of course... Cheers to all the foreign fuckers aka friends who were at Lepakko funerals!]** We had this band called Klitorikset. I was sixteen at the time. Another band that night was called Siat (which means "Pigs"). Siat was a short lived band by some of the Lama members, members from Pohjanoteeraus and some other people, like members that went to do some real rock'n'roll later in bands like Backsliders, etc. Siat was actually a kind of project band, just something to do and have fun with it. So anyway, they were kind of headlining that night and we were the opening act. Our vocalist passed out during our set. He had his head in a kick-drum and we just continued playing, he didn't seem to care, he just slept in a kick-drum.

MRR: That was the only gig Klitorikset ever played, but like many other bands at the time, they were just doing it for fun, to have something to do while drinking. If you didn't get it yet, Klitorikset means "Clits." Klitorikset played mostly covers. They had some songs that they had proudly made by themselves, but none of the songs really survived. All the songs were left behind when the band stopped playing. The other guys from Klitorikset haven't really been in any other band ever since, only Ökky continued playing. Actually he had just got a taste for playing in a band, so why stop there? The next band that happened was called Syöpä, which by the way means "Cancer." Doesn't it look much better in Finnish than in English?

Ökky: Syöpä was not a very serious band. It was another project we had, though it lasted longer than Klitorikset. Jimmy was already playing in Syöpä and later Jimmy and I started Kansan Uutiset. Our drummer was Ykä; as you know he has been playing in Nolla Nolla Nolla, Musta Paraati, and all those other bands.

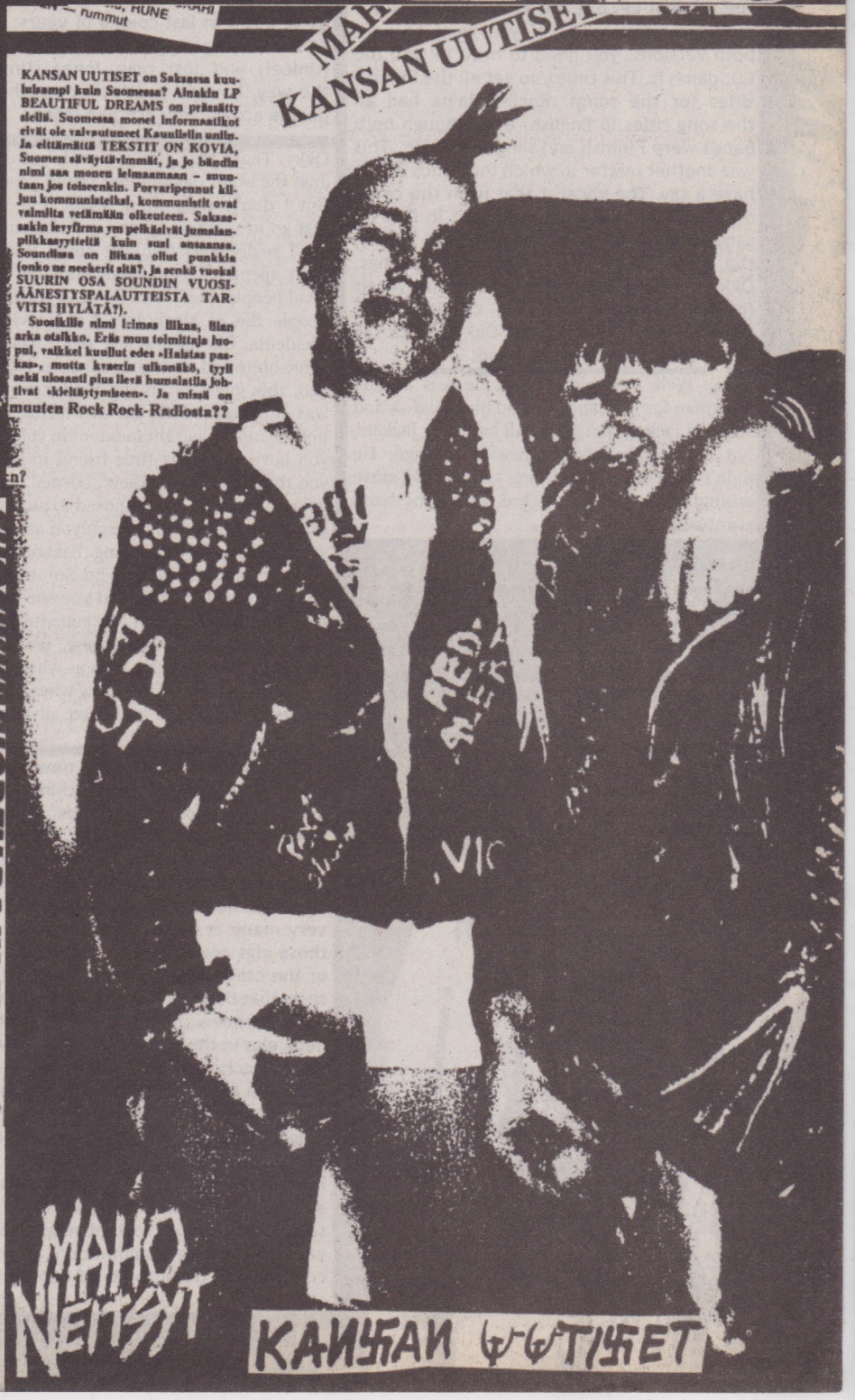
MRR: Ykä got the job as drummer in Syöpä because he answered an ad in a Finnish music magazine called Rumba. That magazine still exists, but it's nothing like it used to be. It was not a fanzine or anything, not only for punks, though lots of punks sold their records, announced for gigs, etc. through that magazine... that was maybe the Internet of Finland in the early 1980s. Ykä still plays punk in a band called Dad's Army; they have some records out, too. Ykä left the band and started to drum in Nolla Nolla Nolla, so it was time for another ad in Rumba. Syöpä never recorded anything, and no songs exist basically anywhere. There is a tape that has a full practice by them, but no one seems to know where that tape is. Ökky has lost his tape, maybe it doesn't exist anymore: another piece of Finnish punk rock history lost, maybe forever. At the time they were not playing full speed hardcore yet, but still old school '77-style punk rock. So why did they started to play so fast when they actually got started with Kansan Uutiset?

Ökky: We kind of had to play very fucking fast, since we had such a fucking fast drummer. He was a very hectic guy, and he always seemed to be very busy, no matter what he was doing. So we had to play fast. At that time, we had already heard Discharge, of course. I still love them. They and GBH were the influences for us, and Lama of course. It's hard to name any other influential or favourite Finnish bands, they are all damn good, but Lama is number one. There were and are some other bands that I love: the Misfits, of course, Special Duties, D.O.A., UK Subs, Toy Dolls, Cockney Rejects, Dead Kennedys...it'll take all night if I keep going. Better stop now.

MRR: The name of the hyper-speedy drummer was Averell. He answered the ad and got the job. That's when Kansan Uutiset really started. It was Ökky, Jimmy, and Averell, the core of the band from beginning til the end. Kansan Uutiset released only one LP, called Beautiful Dreams, though I think it may have caused nightmares to many people instead of beautiful dreams. The record was supposed to be released on Propaganda Records in Finland, but like many other records that were supposed to be on Propaganda, it ended up being released on a German label called Rock-O-Rama. That label later became famous for releasing white power records and other bullshit like that. Kansan Uutiset didn't choose this label and in fact they didn't even know about it, until the record was already out.

koira on parempi koira on parempi

Ökky: Fucking Vilenius (who ran Propaganda Records) released the record with that Nazi label. We didn't know anything about that and now it doesn't matter anyway, it's been released already... so what could we do? I got 30 copies of the record for myself. That's all I ever got. I didn't keep any of the copies myself. I still don't have it, I just gave the records to my friends. At the time it didn't really matter, how many records you got or if you got any money ever or not. I didn't get any money, but I guess someone did. Actually, I got 25 copies of that reissue CD,



KANSAN UUTISET on Saksassa kuuluisampi kuin Suomessa? Ainakin LP BEAUTIFUL DREAMS on präsätty siellä. Suomessa monet informaatikot eivät ole vaivautuneet Kauniisiin uniin. Ja eittämättä TEKSTIT ON KOVIA, Suomen säväyttävimmät, ja jo bändin nimi saa monen leimaamaan – suuntaan jos toiseenkin. Porvaripennut kiljuu kommunisteiksi, kommunistit ovat valmiita vetämään olkeuteen. Saksassakin levyfirma ym pelkäsivät jumalanpilkkasyytteitä kuin susi ansaansa. Soundissa on liikaa ollut punkkia (onko ne neekerit sitä?, ja senkö vuoksi SUURIN OSA SOUNDIN VUOSIÄÄNESTYSPALAUTTEISTA TARVITSI HYLÄTÄ?).

Suosikille nimi isimas liikaa, liian arka otsikko. Eräs muu toimittaja luopui, vaikkei kuullut edes »Haistas paskas», mutta kvaerin ulkonäkö, tyyli sekä uiosanti plus lievä humalatila johtivat »kieltäytymiseen». Ja missä on muuten Rock Rock-Radiosta??

KEE AAMU herään putkasta jostain nurkasta kauhee krapula on kylmä
e aamu ankee aamu ankee aamu
seittemältä kamat putkavahdilta kuulee vittuiluu onnex pääsee pois
e aamu ankee aamu ankee aamu
NEMMIN KOIRAA koira on kauniimpi ku poliisi
a on viisaampi ku poliisi
a on parempi koira on parempi koira on parempi
oliisi
mmin mä nussin koiraa ku poliisii

Ä ÖLI SANOMAA PERKELE

epäkesko (jimmy- averell)

en käy duunissa raksalla
en venaa kesälomaa
en oo maan selkärankaa
l ei oo jäsenkirjaa taskussa

sta paska

tien alla mä elän vaan
ä paskaa pikkujeesuxet ruikuttaa
äköön käteen kirkossa
aa ei myydä kadulla

sta paska

evaisuuden kaiut saatanan harmaita
kään ei mua jaksa kiinnostaa
aa paskaa joka aamu,hyvää huomenta

KOTI, USKONTO & ISÄNMAA

Sotamuistomerkkejä
joku huutaa rautaa rajalle
Papit siunaa sotilaat
joku jaksaa tätä puolustaa
KOTI, USKONTO JA ISÄNMAA
Kumpi on tärkeempää
Tappaa vai synnyttää
Sota tuhoo koteja
Sota tappaa syyttömiä
(KANSAN UUTISET)

with Destrucktions LP on the same disc. That has some demo tracks on it, too, that were not released before.

MRR: Before the Beautiful Dreams LP, there was indeed a plan to release a Kansan Uutiset EP on Propaganda Records. That's what the label was planning, at least. Kansan Uutiset even went into the studio to record nine songs for the 7". Well, that EP never happened. The band doesn't know why it didn't happen, and they don't seem to mind. That demo was released a couple of years ago on the Propaganda CD with the Kansan Uutiset LP and Destrucktions Vox Populi LP on the same CD-a pretty good combination in my opinion. The songs are the same as on the original LP, but the first nine songs are different versions. So if you want to hear both versions, you need to have LP and the CD, damn it. This time you get all the Finnish titles for the songs. Rock-O-Rama had all the song titles in English, even though both bands were Finnish and sang in Finnish. This was another matter in which the bands didn't have a say. The vocalist that is on the cover of the LP was named Saasta, but in fact he sang only two songs on the whole LP. Jimmy, the guitar player, sang most of the songs. Ökky sang one song, and did back up vocals for a bunch more. The vocal credits on the LP are wrong. This is what Ökky has to say about Saasta's role in the band:

Ökky: Well, he looked good. He was a good frontman for the band. He had his mohawk and studded jacket, though we all had such jackets, but at least he was aggressive onstage. He didn't have to play anything, so he could move around a lot. He was kicked out of the band eventually...

that's why he only sings on those two songs on the LP. He also sings the songs that are on the Hardcore '83 compilation LP. We had to kick him out since he and Averell had a fight over something. We didn't want to deal with their fighting, so Jimmy and I made a decision and kicked Saasta out from the band. We preferred to keep Averell, a good drummer, rather than Saasta, a bad vocalist, though he was a good frontman. He's still alive at least, I just saw him couple of weeks ago. He's living a normal family life now, like I guess we all are suppose to, but it just is not happening for me. I don't know how the hell you are supposed to live a normal life, I don't know how to do that, bloody hell.

MRR: Saasta is alive still, but many of the old Finnish punks have died already and quite a few in last couple of years: Ile (from Kuolema), Jore (Nolla Nolla Nolla), Tino (Unicef) and just now Jonza (Unicef). By the way, how do you feel about that, when people around you are just dying?

Ökky: That's true, lots of people are dead now. Just the other day another friend passed away. But I don't really think about it too much. I just go to work every day and live with it. You can't really start thinking about it too much, can't spend all your days thinking about the dead people. You'll end up dead yourself. Some people die of alcohol and some violently in accidents, like Jonza just did... There's been some quite bad situations for sure. Not too long ago, this guy I've known for 27 years died. I was supposed to put his urn to the grave. It's not the most pleasant moment in your life when you have your long time friend in an urn and you think he's inside there, burned, and he's in your hands. You are supposed to put him on his grave. No matter how tough you are, it gets on your nerves. I have a feeling that soon there will be more people starting to go. Some of those old punks are still around, and you see them every now and then. Some of Nukketeatteri members are around, and some others, like Teva who played in Maho Neitsyt with us when Arska was missing... No one really knew where Arska was, he just disappeared and then all of a sudden came back.

MRR: Kansan Uutiset was never active at playing live—they had other things to do, like drinking alcohol with friends. Even though they didn't play that many gigs, they still practiced three times a week. Every week. So they really knew the songs, at least. All in all, they had time to do seven gigs. That's not very many at all, but on the other hand all those gigs are somewhat legendary one way or the other. There's even a video from one show that they played with Varaus. That video footage shows the chaotic aspect of Finnish punk gigs in the early 1980s. There was even more alcohol involved than there is now! Only one of the gigs they did was outside of Helsinki, and even then not very far, in the neighboring city called Vantaa. At that gig, Kansan Uutiset played with one of the first Finnish punk bands, called Problems? They'd always been on the poppier, more melodic side of the fence, so that might have been very interesting combination at the time, compared to the insanity of Kansan Uutiset.

At one of their gigs at Lepakko, during a huge two-day festival in 1982, there was taken the live picture on the front sleeve of Beautiful Dreams...

Ökky: I remember when this picture was taken, during that two-day festival, where everybody was playing.... Ile (from Kuolema): Oh yes, everybody was there, and all the bands you can imagine were playing: Kaaos, Bastards, Riistetyt, Nukketeatteri, Terveet Kadet, Takuu, Alamaailma, just everybody. Even Kuolema was supposed to play there, but we didn't. When it was time to go to stage, I was passed out in the back yard in the snow, and I wasn't able to go onstage, so we didn't play. Actually, I still have that poster on my wall, it's been there quite for a long time now...

MRR: When Saasta was kicked out of the band, they still played a couple of gigs without him, but then there was something else to do.

Ökky: I knew Pexi, and he asked me why wouldn't I join their band Maho Neitsyt? I thought about it for a second and said, why the hell not? So I started to play with them, that was around 1983. That was basically the end of Kansan Uutiset. I don't think we ever really decided to quit, it just happened. We had other things to do and other bands to play in.

MRR: It wasn't too easy for Ökky to be in Maho Neitsyt, since everybody else was living about two hours away, and of course no had cars. Why would they?? So every weekend, Ökky went to a little town (more like a village) called Kuusankoski, to practice.

Ökky: I went to Kuusankoski and Kouvola every weekend. It wasn't too pleasant sometimes. I started to hate sitting in the train every weekend. Sometimes we didn't really play, it was more just drinking. It was drinking anyway, but sometimes we even played. Some people in Maho Neitsyt could never control their drinking, it was like a full time job. Ile: You were always drinking, as long as I remember, and me too. I remember this one night in Oulunsalo. It was this gig where Kuolema was playing with Terveet Kadet and Kaaos again.

I remember that gig. I was not playing that night, I went there just to have fun and drink a few drinks. Ile: Exactly! You passed out eventually and were laying on the floor. You had this bottle in your hand, even though you were passed out. I tried to take that away from you and drink it myself. As soon as I tried to take the bottle, you kicked me in the head with those combat boots. You just wouldn't let the bottle go, and you drank it yourself when you woke up.

That was a good gig. I remember some cops coming that night and stopping the show. Ile: I was taken to jail straight from the stage. Kuolema was playing, and when we finished the set, the cops took me straight to jail. By the way, it was a really good set in my opinion.

MRR: Well it must have been, if you got arrested for it.

Ökky: I think it was the same night that I turned over the book shelf at Mr. Bad Vugum's house...

MRR: Drinking has always been a big part of Finnish culture, and it's always been a big part of the life of Finnish punks, too. Ökky, like so many others, started drinking around the mature age of twelve and hasn't stopped since.

Ökky: It never really affected me at gigs or anything. I could always play, no matter what. Like for instance, Pexi couldn't control his drinking ever. He would pass out on stage quite often, and be completely wasted. But it didn't matter really.

MRR: That was the charm of Maho Neitsyt, whom I always enjoyed watching live. I remember Pexi falling all over me at least two million times at one show. At the same show, some one puked on my leg, and it was just total chaos. But it didn't really matter, since Maho Neitsyt was playing. One was expecting those things to happen during their set. I would expect that during Kaaos, too. So anyway, alcohol is not a stranger to Finns, but drugs were not a big part of the Finnish punk scene ever and are still not as common as anywhere else.

Ökky: There weren't many people doing drugs back in the day, but of course there was lots of pot smoking. I've never put a needle to my arm and I never will. Fuck that shit. I don't need any speed or anything, I have enough speed of my own and sometimes I think I have too much speed even without using that drug. I played that Kansan Uutiset and Destrucktions CD for some people from my work, and they didn't believe that such music could be made without using hard drugs. But we didn't use anything.

MRR: Kansan Uutiset was not just a band interested in drinking even though that's the way it may seem to be to many people. They also had their serious political side. At the time in the early '80s it was almost impossible to get to alternative civil service instead of going to army. Still over 80% of all men go to the army in Finland, since it's mandatory. If you don't go to army service (you can get through that in six months), you have to take the civil service (that is thirteen months). Usually you are working in hospitals, care centers, kindergartens, or theatres if you take a civil service position. But if you decide that you are not going to either of them, you are sentenced to prison, that's normally about half a year nowadays. Örkky went to jail and others took civil service.

Örrky: They asked me where I wanted to do my army service and I told them that I wasn't going to army at all, and that I wanted to go to civil service. They started to scream at me and asked all kinds of questions. They told me that a guy in a studded jacket can't have any ethical reasons not to go to army and they didn't let me take civil service at all, so they told me that I have to take the army service at the city of Hamina. At one point months later I got mail from the army and even a train ticket to go to army at Hamina. I used that ticket one week earlier when we were going to drink a weekend in Hamina. So I ended up going to the army HQ in Hamina, but I was one week late, I was super wasted and I didn't do anything I was told to. I didn't even put that uniform on, not ever. They took me to the army doctor and I told him that he could write whatever he wanted in his papers, but that I wasn't going to stay in the army or doing anything they told me to do. So I stayed one night at the army barracks and even that night I was in jail. So they sent me back home to wait court processing my case.

I finally got a court order that I was sentenced to jail for nine months for not going to the army. I had already tried to get to do the civil service again, but they still thought that I didn't have enough ethical reasons to do it.

So one morning the police were behind my door and they told me that they were taking me to jail right that second. So they took me, and I was inside for nine months. I think it's bullshit that I had to go to jail just because I think differently than they do. I myself thought that civil service would have been much more useful, but they didn't let me take that route. I guess they thought that by not letting me in the civil service, I might have gone to army service—yeah right.

MRR: The LP was made in two days in the studio. After the first day, they got the sound just right, the way it was meant to be. They told the studio engineer not to touch anything after the first day, but the next day when they came back to the studio, the engineer just turned the knobs and put everything on zero. The sound was gone and they didn't have time to try to find that sound again, they only had that one day to actually do all the recordings. So whatever sound came out, was basically by accident-but what a pleasant accident in my opinion!

Ökky: I think that side one on our LP is rock'n'roll and side two is pop music. That's my opinion. Ile: My opinon is that we have enough of this shit, and now we'll start listening to good music and drink some beer.

MRR: And that was the end of that discussion. It was a good night, but a couple of weeks later we got some bad news. Ökky was hospitalized in the intensive care unit, because his body was fucked up in one way or the other. He had all these tubes hanging, and all that. It was one of those near-death experiences, but luckily he's still with us and is back home from the hospital. See you at the bar!

formaldehyde junkies

Formaldehyde Junkies hail from the Twin Cities and play high-velocity, purist US hardcore. Their EP boasts some of the most memorable punk of the last year, and their drunken live shows are violent, sloppy, and actually make you feel like you're watching a real punk band——imagine that. Cam and XXXacto wrote these questions on the back of a pizza box after their recent gig in Winnipeg, Canada. This is the interview that was never meant to be. All photos by Sarah Morrison.

First off, the boring shit. What's your name, what do you do in the band, and what's the best US hardcore EP?
Andy: My name's Andy and I "sing." I'll go with *Pick Your King*, though the answer could change daily.
Matt: I'm Matt, I play guitar. I'm going to go with the Void *Condensed Flesh* demo 7".
Colin: I'm Colin, I play drums. I don't know, that is something I'd have to think about for a long time.

I read a review that said you sounded like all of those bands combined, but better. You guys have only been around for a short period of time and done one record and you've already used and abused more bass players than most bands would in a decade. Who played bass on your recent tour?
Andy: Yeah, well...reviews of punk records are pretty crazy, what are you gonna do?
Matt: Liz from Raining Bricks played bass on tour. We're friends and she knows how to play bass.
Andy: And she's straight edge. Oh yeah, and she asked first.

Why do you always have straight edge bass players?
Matt: So they can drive us around after the show.
Andy: So we can have a fucking babysitter.

Word is that the tour ended with a stalled car and a week in Boston.
Colin: Yeah.

How did the rest of the tour go?
Colin: It was really fun, but we didn't have any records.

Any particular tour stories in general? Why didn't you have any records? This had better heat up right away...
Andy: We gave Anton Underestimated a two-month notice about the records getting repressed, but apparently when you have such a hectic schedule of building model churches out of styrofoam and painting little men, that's not enough time. Our first show ended up being in Pittsburgh (fifteen hours from Minneapolis), then we played in Brooklyn, Albany, and Boston. Those shows were all great and we actually were making money somehow, but my radiator exploded and we spent the next seven days in Boston. The moral of the story is don't try and tour with two cars and no records.
Colin: Brooklyn was really cool, we played with Career Suicide and Regulations. There were 30 punks crashing a party and playing in a stranger's apartment building, and that was better than the show, too.

Okay, so I've seen you wreck other people's gear and hurt yourselves and each other pretty badly. What's the wildest gig you can think of that you've played?
Colin: Are we on wildest or worst?
Andy: Probably the first show in St. Louis at their Slaughterhouse. Everyone was drunk or doing drugs and just crawling all over the place and spitting on me; it was cool.
Colin: Probably our worst and wildestÑbecause we,were all blacked outÑwas our first show at the Mala where we didn't have lyrics or make it through any of the songs.
Andy: ...because they didn't even exist.
Colin: Well, basically, and because we were just beating the crap out of each other. We probably pissed plenty of people off.

Okay, so the next question, this is the clincher. What happened to Twin Cities hardcore?
Andy: It was just an illusion for about six months, in the summer of 2002.
Colin: Yeah, it never existed.

From the perspective of going to the Twin Cities fairly often from the outside, it seems that even a year or two ago you'd go and there would be 50-100 people at a show and now there's five or ten people at a show.
Andy: Look at that serious face. What a question.

Seriously, what happened? Is it because Damage Deposit broke up?
Andy: Okay, okay. In all seriousness, I don't know. Scenes always go through their cycles and we are just on a low note right now. Bands still get out of here with like $100 and a full stomach. As far as new bands go, things have been picking up though. Check out the Agenda.
Colin: Damage Deposit shows were the ones with five or ten people.
Andy: Co-signed.

Are you guys going to finish it?
Andy: Oh yeah. It's only a matter of time.
Colin: We're going to drive it into the ground.

Do you have a message you'd like to send to the crust community at large?
Andy: I don't have any knowledge of the crust community at large. In Minneapolis we have one cruster, Skell, and he is a legit dude. There are lots of people into cellos and fake black metal though!
Matt: Yeah, I didn't think we really had a legit crust scene, just a handful of kids who come to shows with fresh cases of Black Label and then try to get in without paying.

Minneapolis aside, the Midwest is pretty much consistently producing the best hardcore of the last few years.
Andy: It's true.
Matt: Especially Chicago.

Any insight into this? Something in the water? Is it the beer?
Andy: It's the lack of ocean and the abundance of beer. There doesn't seem to be much ego around these parts and I think bands are more influenced by their surroundings rather than whatever local band was all the rage two years ago, and thus producing ten clones of it in the present time. Cows and beer is where it's at man.
Matt: The central time zone has an effect on people.

What crucial shit is going on in the Midwest that hype-chasers should get into?
Andy: Okay, I can strongly get behind the following Central time zone ragers: In Minnesota, the Agenda, Listen Up, the Holy Ghostriders, Soviettes, Four Minute Warning, blah blah. In Wisconsin, Bear Proof Suit, High On Crime, the Amniotics, Get Rad, Catholic Boys, Holy Shit! In Chicago, oh lordy: Punch In The Face, Chronic Seizure, the Repos, Pedestrians, I-Attack, No Slogan, Raining Bricks. In St. Louis: Cardiac Arrest, the Breaks, Rotting Out, Corbeta Corbata. In Winnipeg: Under Pressure, Shock Em Dead, Born Bad. Geez, is that enough? Check that shit out!

I know you guys are Midwest purists. How do you feel about playing in a state that is not even in the Central time zone but claims to be part of the Midwest?
Andy: We'll do it, but we won't be happy about it.
Matt: They're fucking traitors and they don't deserve our company.

Does this go for Michigan as well?
Andy: We haven't tried yet. The State rules.

Any other bridges you'd like to burn? I'm going to try to think of a real question. Any other records coming up?
Andy: *[cracks big smile]* Well, we were going to be on the MRR comp.
Matt: Not anymore!
Andy: Haha, yeah we agreed to do this interview and now they're gonna find out what dumbshits we are!!

How about you actually answering the question?
Colin: We don't have any songs. We're planning on putting out another EP. Andy's going to start a label and hopefully do the US pressing.
Andy: Yeah, after seeing Anton "operate" a label I've decided to start my own. Fashionable Idiots Records is gonna do a Chronic Seizure EP and then the US pressing of our second EP. Kangaroo will be doing it overseas.

What are the dates for your West Coast tour?
Andy: April 14-April 29th.
Matt: I should get that off work.
Colin: Whoa, I should write that down.
Andy: Christ...

A lot of international bands right now are emphasizing a punker facet of hardcore, and playing in an early Ô80s American style. What's your perception of that trend and how you fit into it? Do you think it'll stick around long enough for you to ride it to the top?
Colin: That's the plan. Um, I hope that works out. That was basically the only criteria for us starting a band. I'm sick of bands that play fast but don't sound like they listen to punk.
Matt: Nah, I think most of the bands trying to sound like early '80s hardcore still kind of suck, so there are still not that many great bands. I don't know if this trend will stick around. I just like listening to the F.U.'s
Colin: I don't really notice that trend. Like Matt said, a lot of bands like that still suck, but as far as good bands I don't really see that big of a trend.
Andy: I'm not sure where we fit in. It's fucking awesome, though. I've never understood the hardcore kid that takes "punk" as a negative word. If it's being played right, they are the same goddamn thing!

Describe the Formaldehyde Junkies live experience. I want an enthusiastic sales pitch.
Andy: I probably shouldn't comment on this. I'm a real shy and awkward person. I usually just want them to get over with and hope no show will happen again, but they always do.
Matt: A life of pain, more so to the eyes than the ears...

Is this for real? Are you unhappy people? Do you drink to escape from your life?
Colin: Andy does.
Matt: Drinking is my daily life.

So, there's a huge jump between the demo and the 7", which were recorded in pretty rapid succession. Was this conceived as a less serious thing than it has become?
Matt: Oh yeah.
Andy: It definitely started as a joke. And it keeps getting funnier. This band was only supposed to be a poorly received demo and three shows.

Wait, so you guys aren't actually formaldehyde junkies?
Andy: Well we acquired a bottle of it recently, but Colin won't let me open it!

Colin, are you wearing a scarf indoors?
Matt: He's been wearing that for a while.
Colin: Yeah, I've been doing that.

What are you up to in the near future?
Andy: It's my birthday tomorrow. Sarah is taking me to Olive Garden.
Colin: I'm pretty sure MRR knows about the MRR comp.
Andy: Oh, and the band is doing a West Coast

tour. Come out if you have a sense of humor and like to party.

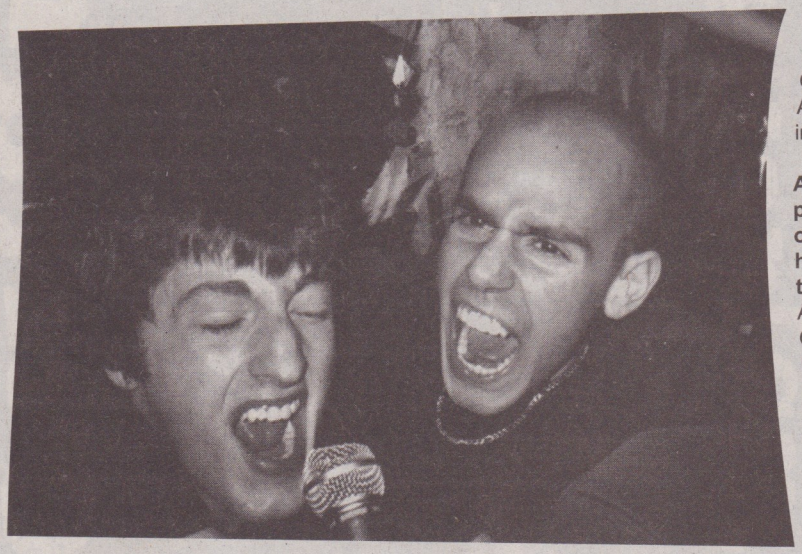
Where would you guys be without Taco Bell?
Andy: Lonely.
Matt: And skinny.

What's the best Taco Bell in the Midwest?
Andy: South Beloit, Wisconsin, I think its exit 139.
Matt: Open 24 hours, burritos full of blood.
Andy: If you don't get enough, you can go next door and get an Eskimo pie or some beef jerky.

You guys are real creeps, I hope you know that. What do you think of Canadian beer?
Andy: It's terrible. But then again it is a two liter plastic bottle called "Stone Cold," so what can you expect?
Colin: It's shitty and overpriced. It might be decent if I had a job and could afford it.

"Nuke the Frats"–what's the origin of that song?
Matt: We don't like 'em.

You can do better than that. You used to live in Dinkytown (frat row in Minneapolis).
Matt: Yeah, I used to live next to a bunch of frat guys. We threw fireworks at them.
Andy: And spray-painted the FJ logo on their houses.



Speaking as elitist assholes, what is the worst trend in punk? You can wish anything out of the picture.
Andy: I'd say people starting bands, but then I'd have to look at us.

Like the massive amount of horrible bands that are touring all over and putting out LPs...?
Andy: Exactly, I'd talk about that forever. But then looking in the mirror, I can't do it anymore haha. Things are just too easy. There are forty-eleven mediocre bands, we only need like fifty really good ones, you know?

What kind of bands shouldn't do LPs?
Colin: Well, if you're a hardcore band, you basically can't do an LP. There are a lot of bands doing these things just because they can.
Andy: Like starting.
Colin: And touring. And writing songs.
Andy: The Internet made it all too easy, any dumbass can start a band and go on tour. The irony is thick tonight!

Can we expect any novelty records, then?
Andy: Well, the first one's already out.

You seem pretty laid back, I'm beginning to think this is all a gimmick.
Andy: Yeah. Don't tell anyone.
Matt: I just smoke a lot of doja.
Colin: I'm pretty much like a no-limit soldier.
Matt: Just listen to Cypress Hill all the time. I'm just not that into punk. I'm just not into it.
Matt: When you look at how much we got paid last night...

So are you just about done with this shit?
Colin: Yeah.
Andy: What? No way! We're gonna ride this out as long as possible. Honestly, it's like, we got out of town for a few days and got paid 400 dollars to throw coffee at fifteen-year old hot topic girls. And you know I'm really into that, why would we give that shit up?
Colin: Andy also pissed on some girl's head once.
Andy: Hey now, I would have let it fly if it was a man sitting there, too. You shouldn't pass out by a fence around a punk house where people are gonna be peeing.

And it will only get more charming.
Andy: Whew, let's hope so!

Is it possible to be a legitimate punk band if you only play bar shows?
Matt: If more than ten or fifteen percent of your shows are bar shows, no, you're not a punk band.
Colin: We've had to play bar shows where we couldn't get an all ages show. That happens.
Andy: What? That never happened. We've only played all ages shows, some were at bars, but still all ages.

Okay, here's one: hip-hop influenced youth crew or death metal influenced crust?
Matt: Death metal influenced crust.
Colin: Yeah.
Andy: Just stick a chainsaw in my ears.

Are these even good, people? Hold on, hold on, I've got one. Do you have anything you'd like to add?
Andy: Maybe a wet fart. Oh wait, is this the end? Check out those tour dates if you live on the warm coast. Get in touch here: nohawk3@hotmail.com. What's up Mike Riley, Ed Steck, Scotty Karate, and the central time zone!

WEST COAST TOUR!!!

April 14th: Minneapolis, MN
15th: Minneapolis, MN
16th: Rapid City, SD
17th: HELP!
18th: Vancouver, BC
19th: Tacoma/Seattle, WA
20th: Reno, NV
21st: Bay Area
22nd: Bay Area
23rd: SoCal
24th: Socal
25th: Phoenix, AZ
26th: Albuquerque, NM
27th: Fort Collins, CO
28th: Kansas City
29th: Cedar Falls, IA

HATRED SURGE

Contact: Alex Hughes/ 19514 Cardiff Pk. Ln./ Houston, TX 77094 or hatredsurge@hotmail.com

Hatred Surge is a fairly new band from Houston, Texas that is compromised of only one member yet does not use a drum machine. Every instrument on their 625 Thrashcore grindviolence debut is played by none other than Alex Hughes, former drummer of Machine Gun Romantics. With influences ranging from Despise You to Discordance Axis, Alex takes the best elements of crust, grind, and powerviolence and mixes it into a sound all of his own. The following interview took place one week before his upcoming tour up the west coast to play the Super Sabado Gigante Fest in the Bay Area.

Interview by Beau Beasley

Photos by Molly Hughes

MRR: So, Alex Hughes, give us a little background on Hatred Surge.

Alex: Hatred Surge is/was something to do while I'm bored up at school in Denton during Machine Gun Romantics. It just started as stuff I recorded on a four-track. I didn't think anything would come of it. I showed Max 625 my demo when MGR played the Bay Area on our first tour and he seemed interested. Then a few weeks later he emailed me and wanted to do an EP. So, that's what happened.

MRR: Well that's real interesting.

Alex: Oh yeah, real interesting.

MRR: That's some good background.

Alex: Wooo!

MRR: So, why exactly did you decide to do a solo project? Were you sick of dealing with other people? What's the deal behind that?

Alex: Well, like I said in the first question…

MRR: No, Alex! Give me the beef! Give me the real deal! Don't avoid the question!

Silence.

MRR: Are you too good for other people?

Laughter.

Alex: You could say that.

More laughter.

MRR: Really? Cuz I get that impression from you sometimes. So you did a solo project just because? There's no one else to jam with in Dallas?

Alex: Basically.

MRR: I find it hard to believe that in Dallas there's no one to jam with.

Alex: That's the way it is mostly because of distance. Everyone lives far away.

MRR: That's quite a bummer. I guess Dallas ain't no Houston.

Alex: Straight up.

Laughter.

MRR: All right, so Hatred Surge is the name of one of the Napalm Death demos. Did this demo have any significance towards the band or did you just like the name?

Alex: I just liked the name. I actually brought up some names with my roommate Jeff and he came up with that one and we both liked it.

MRR: So what's your opinion on that demo? Do you think it sucks or…

Alex: It's different. It's good but…

MRR: It's definitely not Napalm Death.

Alex: Yeah, it's definitely not Napalm Death.

MRR: Exactly. So, speaking of that, what were some of your main influences for Hatred Surge?

Alex: First off would be Despise You.

MRR: Yeah, you can totally hear that.

Alex: Old Pig Destroyer.

MRR: Old Pig Destroyer. What do you think about modern Pig Destroyer?

Alex: They're swinging a little bit towards…

MRR: …would you say sassy?

Alex: Yeah, it's swinging towards the Deathwish Inc. sound.

MRR: Yeah, I can totally hear that. So Despise You, what else?

Alex: Nasum, Napalm Death.

MRR: I hear some Discordance Axis in there.

Alex: There's definitely some Discordance Axis in there.

MRR: Yes there is. Is your drumming influenced by Dave Witte's Discordance Axis days?

Alex: Whose drumming isn't influenced by Dave Witte's? I mean, the dude's a beast.

MRR: Sure is. Are you ever afraid that the guys from Despise You are gonna come by your house and repossess the riffs from your record?

Laughter.

Alex: Uh, I have no concern whatsoever. I think I'm gonna be writing the next Despise

You record. I've been chattin' with Chris Elder via email about that.

MRR: I dunno, man. Those guys are pretty tough.

Alex: Yeah, that's the rumor.

MRR: So, what records do you have out?

Alex: I have an EP on 625 with nine songs and a split EP coming out on RSR with Insect Warfare, who I'm also contributing my bass duties to.

MRR: What are some upcoming releases for next year?

Alex: I'll be doing a split LP with The Endless Blockade and a split EP with Apt. 213.

MRR: Dude, you're going back in time. Apt. 213. That's off the chain. How does that feel? That's one of those bands from the 90s. How does that feel to do a split with a true 90s Power Violence band?

Alex: It's a privilege I can't describe in words.

MRR: That's like goin' back in time, man. It's like Houston 1997 on that. Talk about your upcoming tour in January.

Alex: I'm stoked about it. We're playing a big fest with some awesome bands.

MRR: What's the name of that fest?

Alex: Super Sabado Gigante II.

MRR: I thought you were about to say Fiesta Grande but I guess I was wrong.

Alex: Time machines have not been built yet, Beasley. But yeah, I'm excited about playing with Lack of Interest but most of all, Capitalist Casualties. Mind blowing!

MRR: So why do you think Houston is producing so many grind and power violence bands now? Is it the dirty south connection?

Alex: That's a good question. The stuff that we're playing is just stuff that I've liked for the past eight years. It's just something I like doing and I think it's coming back around everywhere. You got bands like XBraniaX up in Michigan, Warzone Womyn in Pittsburgh, Apt. 213 getting back together, and The Endless Blockade up in Canada.

MRR: So who is Leticia?

Alex: "Leticia" is my girlfriend Amy who runs Dangerously Small Records and has put out some MGR releases as well as a few other things. I wanted to take the Despise You worship to a new level. I asked her to do vocals and she was more than happy to.

MRR: Why do you call her Leticia?

Alex: If you don't get it, you're not down.

Laughter.

MRR: If you had to choose between Despise You and Man is the Bastard, who would it be?

Alex: I don't think I can answer that. There's not enough time to even think about answering that.

MRR: I'm holding a gun to your head! Who would it be?

Alex: For speed alone, I guess I would have to pick Despise You.

MRR: Whoa. Okay, Alex. There's gonna be a lot of disappointed people out there.

Laughter.

MRR: Alex, in person you seem like such a nice, sweet guy but on record you sound straight gangsta. Is there a dark side to Alex Hughes? Explain your lyrics. You're really angry at somebody.

Alex: Well, I write songs about assholes.

MRR: Are they about people you know?

Alex: Well yeah, they're about people I know and used to know.

MRR: Who are these people? Why are you so angry with them? What's the beef?

Alex: I don't think I should have to explain the beef. The beef is in the lyrics.

MRR: I know that you're straight edge, but if you were partying with Excruciating Terror and they told you to hit a joint or you'd lose your grind/violence cred forever, would you do it?

Alex: Uh.

MRR: C'mon, man.

Alex: I'd do the whole thing, man.

MRR: You'd smoke a joint?

Alex: I'd smoke a joint; I'd hit some PCP – maybe a little crack.

MRR: Really?

Alex: Yup.

MRR: Just to hang with Excruciating Terror Alright! I was hoping you'd say yes. Speaking of PCP, I heard that PCP is growing increasingly popular in Houston grind. Please explain this.

Alex: I don't know, man. That fool Raaji in Insect Warfare…

MRR: Yeah, I heard that Raaji from Insect Warfare smokes PCP.

Alex: Yeah, I heard that too. I think it's all talk. It's something he likes to brag about.

MRR: I think it's coming out in this interview that he smokes PCP. I think he has an obsession with the 90s too.

Alex: I think we all do, Beau. That's what's goin' on with the Gulf Coast right now.

MRR: A 90s revival.

Alex: Yeah, but not that shitty Earth Crisis, Chokehold early 90s revival.

MRR: Just straight graffiti marker, PCP smoking, baggy Frank Faerman pants…

Heavy laughter.

Josh from Reason Of Insanity: Shell necklaces.

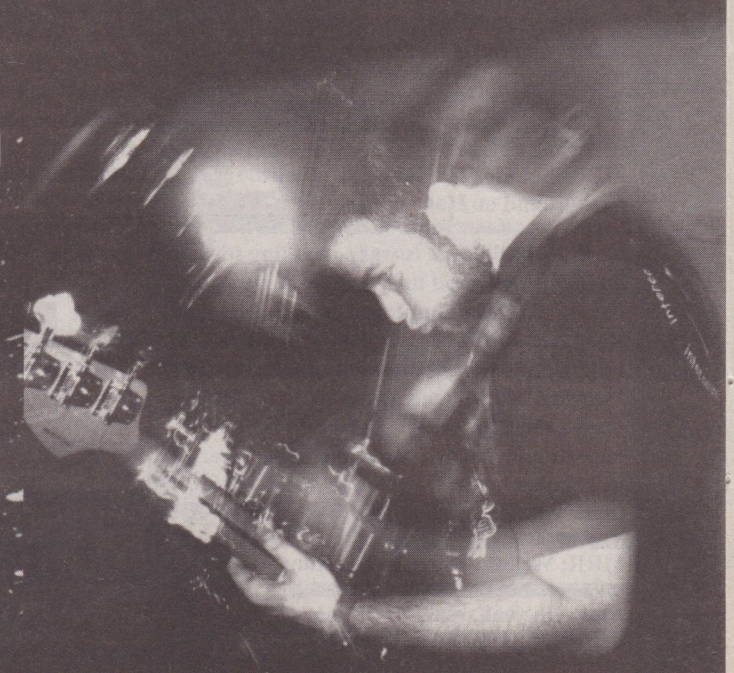
Even more laughter.

MRR: Do you have any last words? Any shout outs?

Alex: A shout out to my homey at Psycho Wolf Records.

Josh from R.O.I.: Wooo!

Alex: My brothers in S.S.E. (R.I.P.) and my boy Mikey in Knuckle Scraper.



WE WANT THE AIRWAVES

Corporate consolidation and greed don't have to be the final words on the matter of media. There are people all over the world taking back the airwaves for DIY punk and politics. If you are involved with DIY or punk radio, please send us your story! This is the story of Broken Radio, a short-lived radio show that flew in the face of the rules to bring people some punk rock...

"Broken Radio" first aired on July 17th, 2003. Just over one year later, we were kicked off. During that time we played bands that listeners in the Upper Valley region of New Hampshire/Vermont had never heard of, pissed off everyone, and had a good damn time.

"Broken Radio" aired every Saturday night from 8 PM to Midnight on 99 Rock WFRD, 99.3 FM, in the Upper Valley. The station is owned and run by Dartmouth College. It was no free-form college station though, it was fully commercial. They had a pre-determined format, including when you could talk, what songs you could play, and when ads aired. They were making money. The money they made, though, was being used to support 1340 AM, WDCR, the Dartmouth free form AM station. None of that really mattered too much to us though, we just wanted a lot of people hear us. We wanted expose people to things they never heard and and make radio interesting and vital to the listener.

"We" was myself, Torrie Crimes, and my co-host, Freddy Furious. Yeah, my on-air name was the same as the guy who played some drums for The Clash. Fucking whatever, not like he needs the name anymore, mine now. Musically I took care of the raw and obscure stuff: garage, hardcore, killed by death, The Tyrades. Freddy took care of the catchier and requested stuff: big time '70s punk, pop punk, shit, even ska. Between the two of us, everything was covered. Local punk kids had something to listen to, local rednecks and mainstream rock fans had something to be pissed about.

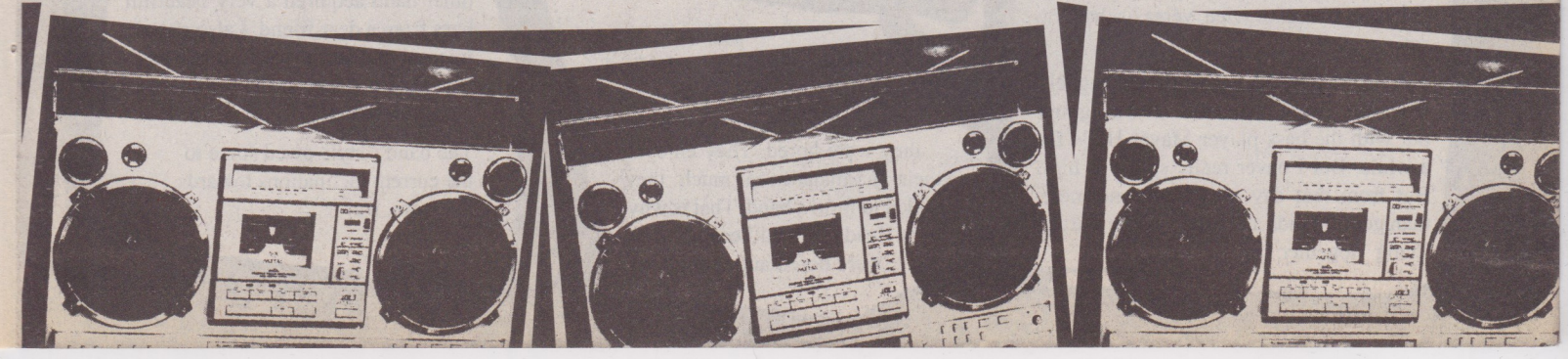
The reaction was immediate, not from the listeners, but from the station management. "You can't say that," was so damn common. It wasn't that we were swearing on air, it's that we were being honest. "Please stop calling in requests for Thursday. Thursday sucks. We went to Warped Tour to see One Man Army and Thursday was playing and they were terrible. We're not going to play them, ever." We said this and immediately got a call from the music director saying that we couldn't bad mouth a band that the station played during regular hours. That, like all requests, was ignored.

Yeah, requests, we didn't take them. Radio is so full of shit. Labels paying to get bands played, stations not playing a band that isn't already popular in other markets (an official 99 Rock policy). Requests? One more piece of shit that radio could do without. We weren't there to please an audience; we were there to share something, something hopefully different. Hosting "Broken Radio" was like making a four-hour mix tape every week, and broadcasting it to a thousand or more people. Requesting songs on the radio is like asking a friend for a mix tape, and telling them what songs to put on it. The only exception to my no requests rule was for inmates at Grafton County Correctional Center, the fuckin' jail.

So, that upset both listeners and management. The list of things we did that no one seemed to like is a bit long, actually. My favorite complaint was, "Why don't you play professional bands? Everything you play sounds like it was recorded in a garage." Of course, a lot of it probably was. Other complaints ranged from us talking too long to playing too many songs with swears to breaking the station format. The talking too long bit may have been fair; we did tend to get carried away on current events, politics, and punk rock chatter. The songs with swears? Well, shit. The complaints about breaking format came from station management. When you show up for your shift there is a piece of paper that tells you what to do. I mean, everything, talk now, stop talking now, play this song now, play this shit now, blah blah blah. At the end of you're shift you signed the sheet. We never read them, never signed them, and occasionally threw them out. We showed up, did the show that came to us, and that was it. Radio has too much pre-everything in it.

Now, I have given the wrong impression. Reading over this I realize that I sound like a sixteen-year old jerk just trying to cause trouble and brag. It wasn't like that. "Broken Radio" started in the summer after I graduated high school. At the time, I had about no friends. No one talked about what I talked about, cared about what I cared about, and most importantly, no one listened to what I listened to. Me and Freddy started doing "Broken Radio" as a sincere effort to bring something that we loved to people who would otherwise never hear it. We wanted to show that radio could be a free, wild, and fun medium. We didn't intend to piss everyone off, it's just that squares out number punks by a great deal in that area of New Hampshire/Vermont. And that's what ended "Broken Radio."

Our between songs discussion one night turned to the war in Iraq and the soldiers who were fighting it. Freddy and me both felt, and still feel, that the "Support Our Troops" slogan is detrimental to the anti-war movement and is hypocritical when used by supporters of that movement. This isn't about our opinions, it's about our radio show, so I will leave it at this: if you support the supporters, you're supporting their cause, and if the supporters are soldiers, their cause is a war. We discussed this, then to lighten things up, made jokes about the troops. Bad idea. Immediately we had complaints. The next day, 99 Rock had complaints. The day after that, the office of the Dartmouth President had complaints. That was that, we had broadcast our final show.



Life is a continual bore

the story of

A-Heads

by Lance Hahn

Hailing from the Tolkien-esque town of Warminster, the A-Heads burst out in 1981 adding to the country mouse anarcho scene that first caught on with local heroes, the Subhumans.

Mel in *Scrobe* fanzine #5: "Everybody knows everybody in Warminster, so the rest of the band know Bruce. I don't know how I came to know Dick, but I used to live in a place called Trowbridge, and on Saturdays and Sundays everybody used to go down to the park. I don't know how I met him, but we've always been very good friends. One day I went to that strange town called Warminster."

Beginning in 1981, the A-Heads were one of several female fronted anarcho bands. At home in the country, the band also made many sojourns to London often with the Subs. Whether that was due to singer Mel's relationship with Subs guitarist Bruce or vice versa is hard to say.

Mel in *Scrobe*: "I know Bruce vaguely from the Stupid Humans. I was going out with the bass player Mayer Herls for a while. But I never really spoke to him. But from that day on we became more than good friends and after a while started living together. It lasted two very good years, but one day Bruce needed his freedom and so it is now all over. We still share the flat and have a very good relationship (sometimes)."

From the start the band reflected a casual small town feel that on first look could seem frivolous. But in fact said much about how their community affected their form of counter culture.

Mel in *Scrobe*: "Jocks girlfriend cuts Jock's hair for him and when I can be bothered to get mine cut, Trotsky's mother cuts it. I don't know what Jock dies his hair with. Maybe soot or something. I use Crazy Colour in mine."

The first line-up of the band featured Mel singing, Jock on guitar, a guy named Andy on drums and future Culture Shock guitarist Nige on bass. The organic development of the group was not too unlike most bands at the time.

Mel in *Scrobe*: "One day Jock and Nigel decided to have a jam in the local youth centre because they were bored. They enjoyed their marmalade so much they decided to form a band. That is why A-Heads formed because they were bored and thought to themselves, 'Hey man, let's get off our arses and do something.' So they did. After a while (a month) they heard my name mentioned at the local pub down the hill, so through trees and flowers they sought me out and asked me to join. After a while we discussed what we thought of the world and basically it was the same thing. So Jock thought of the A-Heads."

In the beginning the desire to play outweighed what little working gear they had.

Mel in *Scrobe*: "Jock and Nigel were working at the time and skimped and saved until they could buy the little guitar amp and a big bass amp. Jock already having a Wooly's guitar from many Christmases before then he decided to save up and buy something a little better (not that he didn't love his Wooly's guitar). Nigel on the other hand acquired a very beautiful bass from a dear friend. I also got my microphone half price from a friend. But now it's lost in the Subhumans box somewhere."

The band's style owed some to the current inclinations towards hardcore. But

principle songwriter Jock's interest in the first generation British punk bands brought in a pop sensibility that was lacking with a lot of their peers.

Mel in *Infection* fanzine #2: "Jock is heavily influenced by the Clash, you may notice this if you see him playing his guitar on stage (I think he thinks he's Mick Jones, it's something to do with the way he crouches down and spring s back up again and hits me with his guitar). Nige is influenced by the Damned and the Ruts. Wally is influenced by Peter Gabriel and I am mostly influenced by the Subhumans. All of us are influenced by the Ruts and Penetration."

With that winning combination, things began to move rather quickly for the group. An early label to spring out of the anarcho punk scene, Dick and the Subhumans had formed Bluurg. Initially a tape label, they had released early live and demo recordings of the Subs and were beginning to help spread the word of their local scene. One of the first non-Subhumans tapes was a compilation called *Wessex '81*. This tape featured the first A-Heads recordings as well as Organized Chaos (featuring former Stupid Humans front person Ju) and Wild Youth (featuring Steve formerly of the Mental and later of Pagans). The full-length tape featured complete demos from each band. While the A-Heads material was fairly rough, the blueprint was clearly visible.

Soon after, the group was approached about releasing a single for TW Records. Started by Moskow manager Allan Partner, the label was home for a wide variety of artists from the female fronted post-punk of Animals and Men to old folky Steve Tilston.

Mel in *Scrobe*: "There was once a very nasty little record company on the outskirts of Melksham who said they would like to do a record with us. So as we were very naïve we agreed. But several months went past and we didn't hear nothing from them until one day I was at college and a distant friend came to me and said, "Mel, I have just seen your record cover." I didn't understand this at all. So we decided to investigate. We found we had to record a record with them. We didn't object to that but the cover was absolutely disgusting and they wanted to sell it at normal price. After many months of negotiating they decided they would release the single and the cover our friend had designed and also the price could be 85p."

The *Dying Man* 7" on TW Records was a three song EP. From the first drum roll, this is a kicking record with the b-sides, "Hell Cell" and "Changing Places", as substantial as the anti glue sniffing title track. Pitch perfect vocals that almost resemble My Bloody Valentine on 45 when double tracked soar over the addictive melodies.

Mel in *Infection*, "'Changing Places' is about the people who don't fit in with society. They never have and they never will. They try their hardest to be like everyone else instead of being an individual. By trying to be the same as every Tom, Dick and Harry. They find it doesn't work so in the end instead of being satisfied with themselves they get depressed and wither away.

"I'm afraid we can't tell you what 'Hell Cell' is about as we did not write the lyrics of the song. Our ex-drummers (Andy) sister Sharon was very taken by us and she asked me if I would like to do something with some lyrics she had written, so that is what we did."

While Mel was influenced by the Subhumans it was clear that she was mostly taken by the existential elements more so than the broader political slogans. But that didn't mean they weren't on the same side politically.

Mel in *Scrobe*: "We think vivisection is disgusting, revolting and obnoxious. There is no word for it or excuse. If girls are frightened that they look ugly without their make-up, there are many places that sell non-vivisection products. The Body Shop is especially good."

Mel in *Infection*: "No, we wouldn't sign to a major company, they rip people off left, right, and centre. Also they have full control on whatever you're doing. We will hopefully stay on Bluurg forever. If this fails we would go onto a similar company."

The hassles the band was having with TW Records wound up delaying the record for months devastating its initial release with small returns. In the meantime, Bluurg Records were preparing a compilation of local bands called *Wessex '82*. The 7" would include new songs from the Subhumans, the A-Heads, Organized Chaos, and the Pagans (featuring future Subhuman Phil). With all four bands recording their song on one day at Pickwick, the recording was a bit rushed. Still, with Steve Collinson engineering all the tracks and Bruce Subhumans producing, it's a pretty great sounding record. In fact, with original drummer Andy splitting, Bruce became the A-Heads second drummer if only on a temporary basis.

The A-Heads track was titled "No Rule" and was a nice bookend to the Subs track "No Thanks." It was also the group's most outwardly political number.

What's the use of trying too hard?
Everything we've doe means nothing at all
And what we try it's breaking their laws
What we need is a new independence
To put a stop to death and defiance

Mel in *Infection*: "No, we wouldn't call ourselves anarchists. We believe anarchy is a personal thing. We don't think there would ever be total anarchy. 'Some men were born to rule' (Apostles). It's a sad fact of life. Anarchy would be a marvelous thing if it worked. But to be honest we can't see it ever will. Instead we prefer to create our own destinies."

In no small part helped by the popularity of the Subhumans, the record was sold loads bringing new interest in the A-Heads. With the *Dying Man* single something of a failure at the time, sales suddenly picked up with a second pressing selling 20 times better than the first.

Mel in *Infection*: "The first single that were released sold 109 copies. When re-released it has sold up to now 2000 copies. It is not a vast amount of singles but it is a hell of a lot better than 109 singles. We believe the *Wessex '82* single has helped it to sell as well."

With the success of *Wessex '82* and the *Evolution* 7" by the Subhumans, Bluurg was starting to look at other groups to work with. The A-Heads were the first recording a new 7" for release in 1983. The subsequent three-song EP was *Forgotten Hero*, the recording the group are probably most known for.

The title track was a bit of a change for the band making more use of tempo changes to emphasize different elements of this fictional tale of a war veteran.

He's only just realized there's better things to do
Than watch other people dying he wished that he'd died too
For now he has no arms and legs and no one speaks to him
And he can hardly move at all a muscle or a limb

Musically, the B-sides "Isolated" and "Love Or Pain" are more in the vein of the first record. But the subject matter is broadened. "Isolated," an attack on homophobia, was a rarity in the early '80s even in the anarcho scene.

You have to meet in discreet places
Away from all recognizable faces
Why can't they accept humans like these?
Instead they pass them off as an awful disease

"Love Or Pain" tackles some of the existential area that the Subhumans were known for existing in not to mention an almost inadvertent nod to Gang of Four's "Anthrax."

So you believe in love
Well I can't imagine why
Oh yes love's the eternal dream
It even makes you cry
It screws up your brain
It tears you apart
Yes you're full of love
And a broken heart

This record also served as an introduction to the band's third drummer, Wally. To further complicate matters, it would be the last recording with Nige on bass. For a brief time, Wally moved to bass and Bruce rejoined on drums. But that was far too confusing and Wally returned to the drums with Lester finally joining on bass.

Despite the line-up changes there was a bit of momentum now with the release of the 7". Upon the release of the record, the band was already making plans for more recordings.

Mel in Scrobe: "'Forgotten' is now out on Bluurg Records.

We should be venturing into Southern Studios in the near future to record either a 12" or an EP. After that we hop to do an LP."

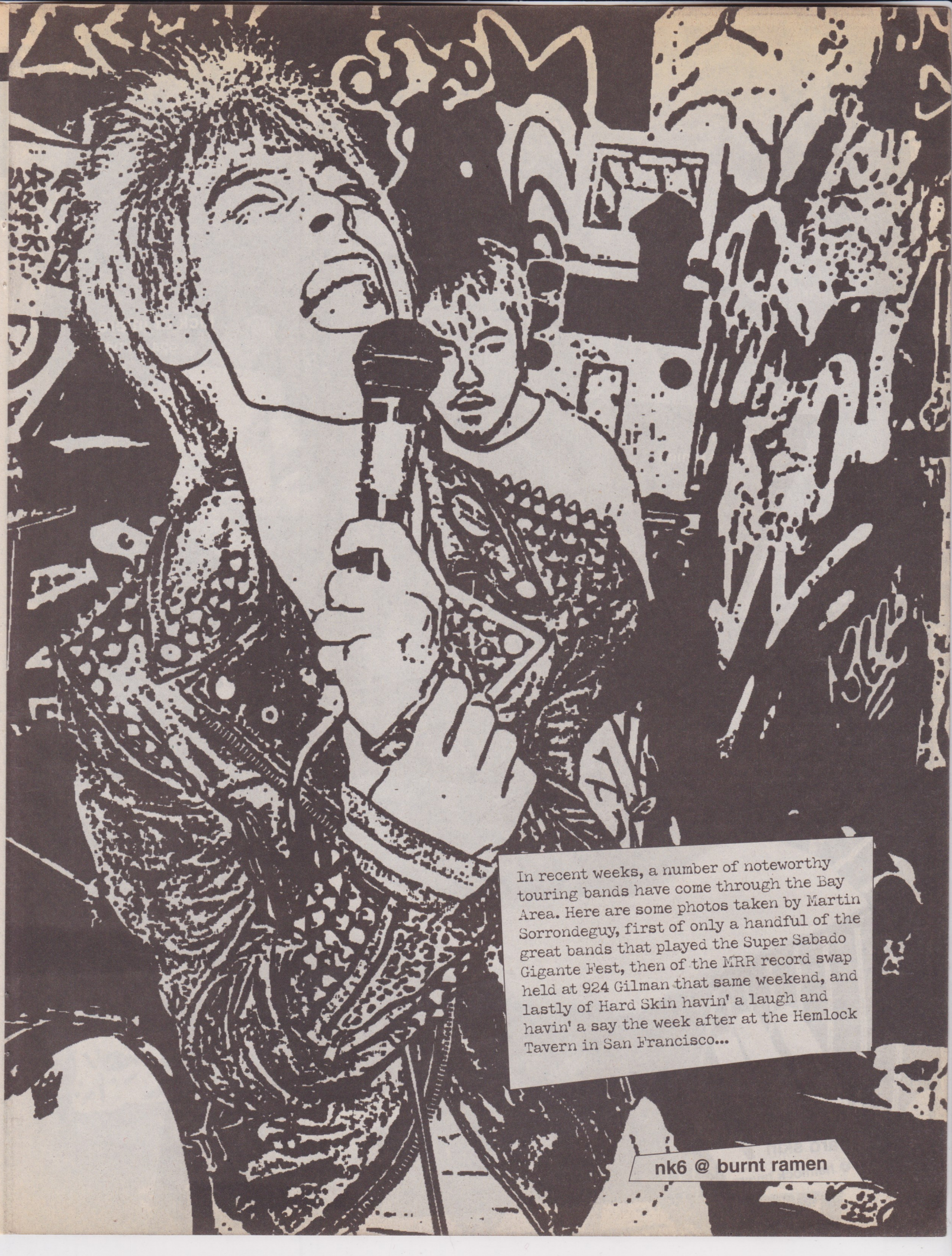
For whatever reason, that never materialized. Mel began singing with London based Faction. The band spent the rest of '83 and '84 doing various recordings, though not much materialized. A collection of live recordings was released on 96 Tapes. Finally, a cassette of studio recordings was released on Bluurg. *Vox Populi* would be the group's last stand with eleven tracks recorded over two different sessions.

With "Dying Man" the only previously recorded track, the group were able to display the evolution they had gone through since their humble beginnings. Even the somewhat eerie intro shows how far their interests had stretched. Despite some of the rough recording quality, it's a great catchy punk record with the haunting vocals floating over some of the groups most effective songs like

"Not Last Night," "Reason Hard To Find," "Church Of Religion," and "Wolfman." Even the updated version of "Dying Man" is especially volatile.

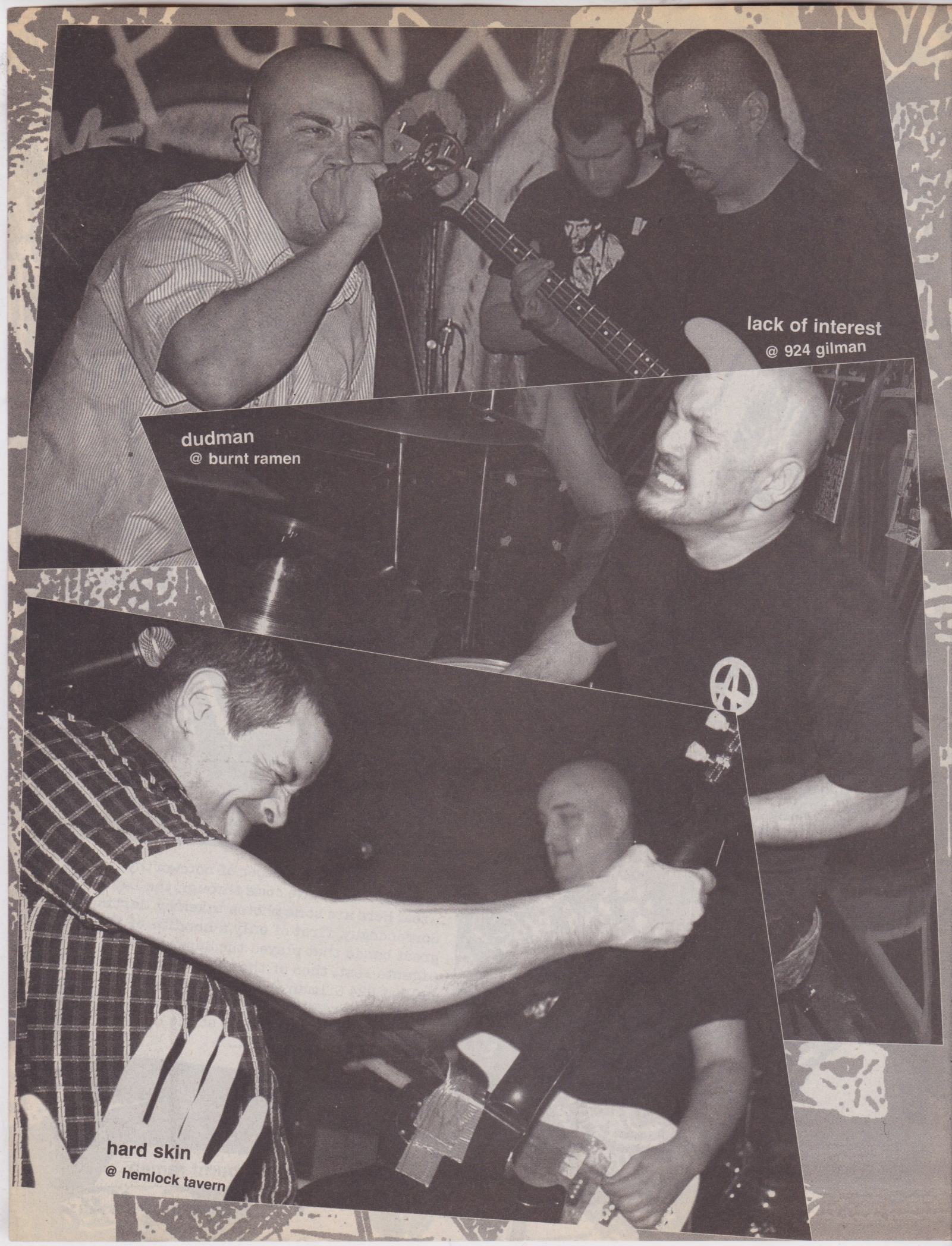
With that, the band split. They reformed for the next year as Mindgames. But even that incarnation was done by the end of 1986. Mel would be the only one to continue singing showing up five years later in Tiny Giants with Sid formerly of Organized Chaos and Ed pre-Stratford Mercenaries.

Melin Scrobe: "We believe in anarchy of the mind, freedom in ones self. We try to help people to reasons and discuss their disagreements instead of fighting. In the hope that peace will rule."



In recent weeks, a number of noteworthy touring bands have come through the Bay Area. Here are some photos taken by Martin Sorrondeguy, first of only a handful of the great bands that played the Super Sabado Gigante Fest, then of the MRR record swap held at 924 Gilman that same weekend, and lastly of Hard Skin havin' a laugh and havin' a say the week after at the Hemlock Tavern in San Francisco...

nk6 @ burnt ramen


lack of interest
@ 924 gilman
dudman
@ burnt ramen
hard skin
@ hemlock tavern

mrr record swap

bury the living
@ burnt ramen

MAN

The trio Manikin has released a 7" and two CDs on Super Secret Records, most recently the album Still. While they've been playing since late 2000, it seems that many people outside of their hometown of Austin, Texas have not been introduced to their music – which is a cryin' shame!

Interview by Timothy Hefner and David Hyde

Photos by Courtney Chavanell.

MRR: Manikin is not the same three people that have always been the band. Can you tell me how it started off and how it transitioned to what it is today?

Alfie: Because we're bored? Everybody else is in a band, so we started a band. We first started in 2000. That's fuckin' old! Shit, motherfucker. It was George (Hewitt) playing bass, I was playing guitar…

MRR: Who played the first show?

Alfie: It was me, Lisa, and Doug. We played with the Hatchbacks at Trophys.

MRR: When was that?

Alfie: Late 2000.

MRR: How long did the band stay with that lineup?

Alyse: Hugo played drums after Lisa, before me. That was for a couple of years and he's on the first CD. Then about two years ago I joined the band because Hugo had moved. Alfie didn't realize that I liked Manikin and I was like, "Really, I like Manikin, I'll play drums in your band." I just had to prove I liked the band.

BJ: I've only been in the band for a year. Doug played bass the whole time, but he's not in the band anymore. I'm on the second album and the 7".

MRR: You recorded the first CD with a different lineup, and the sound was different, too. What made you progress into how you sound now?

Alyse: I think the old lineup—I don't want this to come out the wrong way—I think the old band, the other members, saw it as a whole band where each member has his part. And now, it's still like that, but, I don't want to step on what Alfie's doing because I really love what he does, so I play to what he's playing, not like, "I'm the drummer and this is my part."

MRR: So, Alfie, you write all the music?

Alfie: I come with a riff and then we see if we can come up with different parts. Usually, I'll have a main part and we try to…

BJ: Find different hooks to throw in.

Alfie: I think on the first album we didn't know where we wanted to go.

MRR: Did it take playing with new people to figure out where you wanted to go?

Alfie: When we recorded it, we realized the album didn't match. It has two personalities.

MRR: I think that you have your dark, mellow vocals, and Doug had more happy, poppy vocals, it didn't mix.

Alyse: That's what I'm saying; with BJ and I, we're more willing to just let Alfie go and do what he had in mind and we just follow.

Alfie: When you start a band, you let it have a foundation. You have a goal. We started as a band not really knowing what we wanted to sound like and having to figure it out.

BJ: I can't speak for Alyse, but I've never played in a band that sounded anything like this. It's been garage or New York Doll wannabe bands, and stuff like that.

MRR: What bands have you all been in before?

BJ: Five or six bands. I'm the bass whore.

Alfie: I played in high school. After that I didn't play for a long time. I started my own band because I couldn't find another band to play with.

Alyse: I played in high school, but not really in any bands. When I moved here I joined The Winks, then side projects and stuff.

BJ: I've been playing since high school in a bunch of embarrassing bands I'd rather not name. Then I moved here and played in The First Downs who rule and will return one day; The Hatchbacks with Dean and Tom, who have returned. Then I played with East Side Suicides, and New Disciples, then with Manikin and Tokyo Nites.

MRR: Has Manikin ever played any shows outside of Austin?

BJ: Not with this lineup. The reason being, I've played Dallas and Houston a lot—anywhere you can drive in a weekend—and Dallas sucks, Houston sucks even more, San Antonio is just as bad. With gas prices what they are these days it costs so much to drive out of town to play to ten motherfucking people. Why not stay at home you play to more than that. Even on a bad night you play to at least a handful of your friends. So, fuck you, Dallas. *[Laughter]*

MRR: After covering Joy Division, why did you name your album "Still"?

Alfie: Because we sound like Joy Division.

MRR: They beat you to the chase! What happened here?

Alfie: Because of our song "Stand Still."

Alyse: We had a whole list of names…

BJ: You should see what it could've been. It was almost "Fuck Kangaroos" or something like that.

Alfie: I was gonna do "Stand Still" but it just sounds funny.

MRR: Do you spend a lot of time looking for the right equipment for the sound you want?

Alfie: No. I think the cheapest is best.

MRR: You have a certain sound through all the pedals, though…

Alfie: Yeah, but I'm not gonna go look for a "good pedal." I just get ones that I like what they do.

MRR: Have you played through the same stuff for most of the band?

Alfie: If you give me a good amp that looks good and is cheap, that's probably what I've got.

IKIN

BJ: I played with a piece of shit for years, and I finally got tired of it so I saved up and bought something good.

Alyse: I've had the same kit for ten years; it's the only one I've ever had.

Alfie: I think you should just learn how to play. Fuck the fucking knowing all, "what kind of guitar do you have?"

BJ: I'm an equipment nerd, but I try not to show it much.

Alfie: That's why I like the old musicians: you can see it's just their passion. You need a little bit of imagination to think about it, but once you realize it's just how they play.

BJ: You can be awesome by just picking up a piece of shit guitar and playing.

Alfie: Look at those reggae musicians: they used what they had, because they didn't have anything else.

MRR: How long did you guys spend in the studio recording?

BJ: We recorded it all in a day; we mixed in another day.

Alfie: No, I did the vocals on another day.

Alyse: We recorded most of the stuff on a Saturday; then went back in to do overdubs and vocals.

MRR: Do you guys go into the studio with an idea about how to do the right studio things to get the sound that you want? Or do you leave it up to the studio engineer who knows the sound that you want to figure it out?

BJ: The last guy who did the last album, Mark Nathan, he's a good engineer and he knows what kind of sound we're going for.

Alyse: And we would explain what we want and he would make it happen.

MRR: Two of the songs from the 7" are on the CD too. What made you decide to re-record them?

Alfie: We didn't re-record them—just re-mastered.

MRR: You recently filmed a video for your song "Face The Wall." How did the idea come about?

Alyse: Richard (Super Secret) really wanted us to do it.

BJ: My friend Dave has that basement. Basements are not very common in Texas whatsoever. It's just kind of weird down there. My buddy George Hewitt does video work.

Alfie: He was the first bass player for Manikin.

BJ: He has that www.punkrockvideos.com where he sells and trades videos. He filmed the video. The whole time we were setting up we just went around picking up stuff saying, "this would look cool." We hung those sheets up and we had the lights…we just wanted it to look very weird and crazy. Avant-garde.

MRR: How do you show a video like that? On the TV or are there other ways for you to show it?

Alyse: It's on the Internet and on the CD and they played it on Austin Music Network a few times before they got bought out.

MRR: You guys have all known Richard for a long time?

BJ: Yeah! Not only with this band, some of the other bands we've been in have dealt with him and he's been the best guy you could ever imagine. Richard is the guy who, the day the albums come in, he'll be at your front door. And he'll be there ten minutes earlier than he says.

MRR: I don't think I've ever seen you guys without him in the audience.

BJ: If there was a show then he was probably out of town. "I'm real sorry I had to miss you but I had to go to New York." "It's OK Richard, we're playing next Tuesday, too."

Alyse: I think he's released every recording I've ever done.

Alfie: It's more like a friendship.

MRR: When you have a new release, who does the artwork and is it something that's really important to you or just something that you've got to do?

Alfie: I think it's important. You have an image of your band; you listen to a song and you have the image in your head.

MRR: I think the CD looks brighter and happier than the actual music.

BJ: It's a trick

Alfie: It's not happy. He's got a gun. He's gonna shoot you. It's funny because you think he's going to shoot you with his finger, but he's got a real gun.

MRR: Tonight you had an extra member with you playing trumpet on a few songs. Was that something you've thought about for a while?

BJ: We had Bill Jeffreys play with us in the studio and live when we do that song. We had him at a couple of shows. At Beerland one day we're all drunk and during the song "Monkey Blood" he just started playing on it and it sounded great. So we'll just call him every couple of weeks when we're playing and I'll be like, "Can you do it? We'll play 'Carry On,'" and he's like, "I wanna play Monkey Blood!" He said he practices along to the CD at home.

MRR: He's in a bunch of other bands?

Everyone: Attack Formation, Total Sound Group (everyone screams out other bands)

BJ: He's the Pete Best of Manikin.

MRR: Any future plans for Manikin?

BJ: Children, lots of children.

Alfie: We're gonna become a Christian rock band.

Alyse: We're excited about recording again, though we know it's a ways off. We've got about eight more songs to write before we even think about studio time.

BJ: We have like four to five half-songs written.

MRR: Plans to play outside of Austin, I hope?

All: Nah.

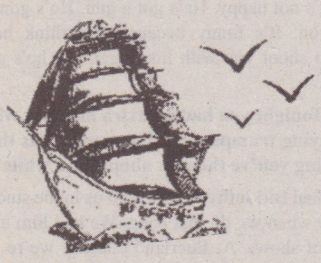
Alyse: Chicago maybe.

BJ: Thanks to George Bush's economy it's really fucking hard to tour right now. I'll be blunt. The last four years that I've had vacation I've gone on tour. I really just want to take a real vacation!

I first met Upinatem a couple of years ago while planning a tour. They are one of the few punk bands in Boise, Idaho working their asses off in their scene, not only for themselves but also for other bands. They play because they have to, not for fashion, scene points, gals, or beer. A working class motley crew of punks brought together for a love of punk, Upinatem is a band that could school us all. I interviewed them during their tour through southern California, while they were crashing at my house, eating the spaghetti I cooked for them.
Interview and introduction by Renae Bryant.

Upinatem is:
Sean Capps: Vocals, Guitar
Brady Borrowman: Guitar
Pate: Bass
Mike AOC: Drums, Vocals
Kevin Shortfuse: Guitar

Upinatem



MRR: How did Upinatem come to be?
Sean: In 1995, after being heavily immersed in the early 1990s punk revival for a few years, I got together with two of my cousins, Jon Bartholomew and Andrew Glassett, and started playing. I'd been playing guitar for a couple years and had grown up playing piano. We were all listening to Epitaph and Fat bands at the time, so we started playing punk covers and I started writing songs. After the point where we decided to be a band and came up with a name, it only took me about a month to write all the songs for our first album, *Cool People Suck*. We were practicing almost every night. I'm the only original member left. Brady has been with me for seven years, though, and Pate and Mike for about three. We just added Kevin last January, because I was sick of playing guitar and singing.

MRR: Why the name [pronounced up-an'-at-'em]?
Sean: One of the first guys we jammed with was a guy named Steve Babcock, whom I graduated with in Jerome. He came up with it. We weren't nearly as political at the time; I'd like to lie and say it's about standing up to the man and fighting back, but it's not. To me, at the time, it really meant "get off your ass and into the pit."

MRR: How is the new CD, *The Untimely Demise of a Once Well Read Nation,* being received?
Sean: It's been out for over a year now, but with a band like us, it takes about that long to really get it out there. It was written and recorded before the election, so there's a lot of hopeful shit in there aiming to inspire our friends in Idaho to go vote against Bush. Since the asshole is magically still in office, those songs are unfortunately still applicable.

MRR: The sound is slightly Bad Religion, but very Fat Wreck Chords. I was surprised and impressed by how overtly political the lyrics are. Do people often comment on this after reading the lyrics?
Sean: Yeah, if they read them. Being a punk band in Idaho is quite different than for our counterparts in California. In Idaho, everyone's a Republican. Even most of the kids that come to our shows vote Republican, because they don't care about politics and they vote how their parents vote. This presents a great opportunity for us. We don't get all Anti-Flag in between songs at our shows, but our lyrics definitely lay shit out for them in an understandable manner. Unless these kids go to college, like we all did, and actually hear a different point of view, the cycle of ignorance will go on forever in this state. The first night of this tour was a show in our hometown of Jerome, which was also a going away party for a kid who was getting called back to Iraq. He's National Guard. And there he was, running in a circle pit while we sing about how the president lied to him. It's fucked up, and it tugs on my heart-strings a little, because the people who support this administration also seem to be the ones getting fucked over so hard. How could I be in a punk rock band and not sing about this shit?

MRR: Tell us more about the title and theme of the record.
Sean: The title is actually a song title from one of our older, shittier records. Basically, it reflects the dichotomy of the smartest, most innovative, wealthiest nation in the history of the world having the stupidest leader ever, implementing the most idiotic foreign policy. This reflects well the message of most of the songs on the album. Again, most of it is pointed at liberally-challenged people we know in Idaho, so what might seem like elementary facts to you and me are mind blowing for the ditto-heads we encounter everyday.

MRR: Who did the artwork? What is the symbolism?
Sean: Artwork was done by Rocky at Black Cat Tattoo in Boise. Rocky's done most of Pate's tattoos, and he and Pate kind of came up with it in relation to the title. It's cool, it looks like an old map. I guess you could say the boat pulling the US out of the continent is like pulling the bad apple out of the barrel. We're not too deep, though, so mostly it just looks cool. Our latest shirts were done by Sean Wyett who owns the Black Cat shop, which deserves mention because, firstly, he's amazing and did the back cover of *Legacy of Brutality* (the Misfits, duh), and secondly, because he did our shirt design for next to nothing and deserves a shoutout in MRR. www.blackcat-tattoo.com

MRR: From my perspective, you are *the* punk band to go to for a show near Boise, Idaho. Tell us about the scene there.
Mike: Well, it's true that I book shows in Boise sometimes, but if I was the only one doing it, our scene would be fucked! The Boise scene is very segmented: street punk and metalcore are huge in Boise right now, and the street punk kids tend to go to those kinds of shows, while the kung fu hardcore kids go to metalcore shows. Then my friends and I have our own underground house-show scene, with all different kinds of bands. The scene as a whole is diverse enough, that when I book shows it's not too hard to have a grab bag of different styles on the bill. I often try to bring different crowds of people together. Upinatem is catchy and punk rock enough, yet also fast and heavy enough, to fit in with just about every kind of underground band in town, so we aren't hindered by the divisions in the scene.

MRR: Upinatem is on a very DIY punk tour right now. How is it going? What are the highlights?
Mike: It wasn't too bad, considering that it was the first tour for all of us. We were kinda worn out by the end, but it was a lot of fun. It's hard to point out highlights because even though the actual shows were up and down, the fact remains that, throughout the trip, we were among friends who supported us and went out of their way to make every night worth it. I do need to acknowledge the kids in Walla Walla and Las Vegas, who were fucking amazing. We're not big in Boise by any stretch, and we're often surprised when people tell us they like us, so seeing the totally apeshit response from kids away from home blows us away.

MRR: A couple of you are punk rock parents. How is it juggling all the roles? Does it affect your lyrical content or perspective?
Sean: Brady and I each have a son. I know having kids has ended a lot of bands. It almost did for us, but once you adjust for it, and everyone in the band is considerate and flexible enough, it actually helps us focus. Hell, I started this band ten years ago, and we're just barely getting to our first multi-state tour! It helps because it made us ask the hard questions of ourselves: are we just doing this for fun, or do we really believe in it enough to make the sacrifices necessary? Our kids are both three years old now, and we're still doing this. It didn't affect my lyrical content as far as being "kid friendly," because my kid doesn't listen to us, but it did focus my perspective. In our song "Desperation," it says, "I guess we're no fun because we care for the welfare of our sons and their futures in this narcissist, pro-fascist nation." In short, we might not party after a show as much as we used to, but punk was never about partying to us anyway.

MRR: It is almost too easy to be in a band in southern California. How is it in Idaho? How did punk rock find you?
Mike: It's not that hard to start a basic punk rock band. If you're in Boise looking for really good musicians to play with, that's a different story, but as long as you can get past the mental block of not being good enough at your instruments or whatever, you'll be OK. It took me a while to get into punk rock and start playing music. I was sixteen when my friend gave me a mix tape with stuff like NOFX and old MxPx (back when they were fast). That was the gateway to shit like Propagandhi and Satanic Surfers, and then I got into more extreme and/or political music from there.
Sean: I know it's lame to say, because we're not big outside of Idaho, but I've been doing this for so long that I can't imagine not playing this kind of music. When we started, punk was so huge, we could just hint at having a show and hundreds of kids would show up. It means more to me now because we have to really work to get a good show together. But there are other bands around who we are friends with and play often with, so it strengthens us and makes us better.

MRR: What is the most important issue you feel Americans need to pay closer attention to right now?
Mike: Dude, there's way too fucking many. Whatever grabs your attention and means something to you personally, focus your efforts on that. Enough people doing that will lead to positive results.
Sean: Yeah, it's hard to pick just one. In general, anything that is currently being threatened by the Bush administration (abortion rights, privacy and civil rights, Supreme Court balance, the environment, world peace…) on any given day should be something we are focusing on and talking about. If you want one catch-all issue, it'd be impeaching Bush altogether. That'd help a lot.

MRR: Last words?
Mike: Thank you Renae, for everything you've done for us! Also thanks to everyone who has ever cared about us and let us know that we exist for a reason.
Sean: Thanks to the kids who came and watched us and bought shit from us on this tour. Your disappointment will soon subside.

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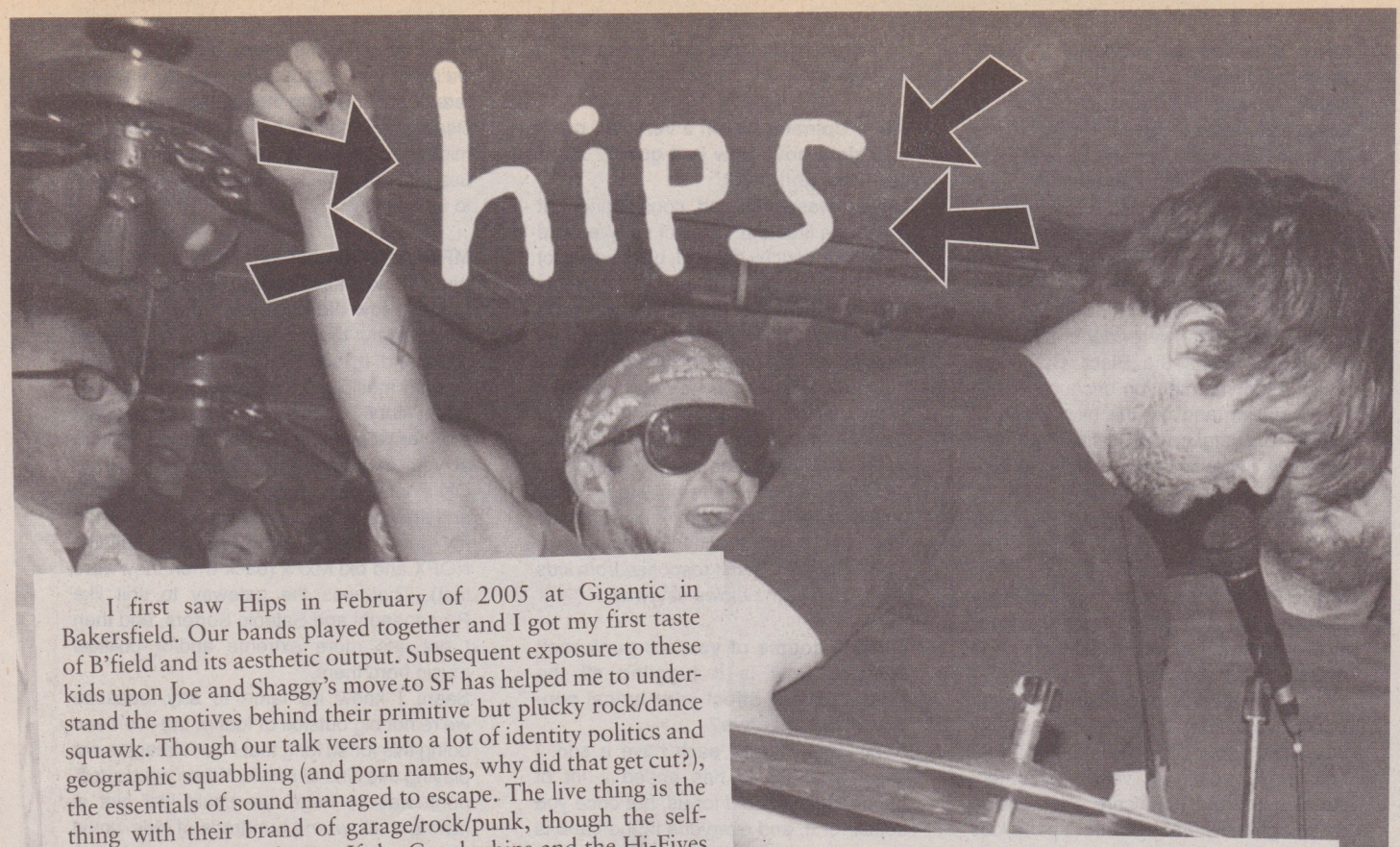
hips



I first saw Hips in February of 2005 at Gigantic in Bakersfield. Our bands played together and I got my first taste of B'field and its aesthetic output. Subsequent exposure to these kids upon Joe and Shaggy's move to SF has helped me to understand the motives behind their primitive but plucky rock/dance squawk. Though our talk veers into a lot of identity politics and geographic squabbling (and porn names, why did that get cut?), the essentials of sound managed to escape. The live thing is the thing with their brand of garage/rock/punk, though the self-released 7" is a good start. If the Coachwhips and the Hi-Fives had a screaming baby, that would be the closest approximation. It is rock 'n' roll, that much is clear. Thanks to Matt Grothman for spiritual guidance. *Interview by George Chen.*

MRR: So who is in the band and what do you play?

Dave: Bass and vocals.

Joseph: Guitar and vocals.

Shaggy: Drums and shout sometimes but I do sing on one song and Dave plays the drums.

MRR: So you started Hips when?

Joseph: March of 2004 was the first show but I guess the band started with Dave and myself in late January of '04.

Shaggy: Dave is the band guy; he's been in every band in Bakersfield. He's in twelve bands right now. (*Laughs*)

Joseph: I think Dave and I met together in his practice studio twice and then Shaggy just walked in and started playing drums.

Dave: Yeah, Shaggy and I had practice later on after me and Joe's jam session. I double booked myself. (*Laughs*)

Shaggy: I showed up all like interrupting like I always do and I walk in and they're playing so I say I'm going to leave but then Dave told me that I should sit in and jam. I think we wrote three songs or something.

Joseph: But after that I still had to convince Dave to let her in the band.

Dave: Well, yeah, she sat in and I was hesitant just because I didn't want to be in a band with the same people under a different name or whatever, but it worked so I decided to go ahead with it. It's a trip that Joe and Shaggy were just beginning musicians when we first started and I've been listening to their other band, Saboteurs, and I'm just like, "Wow, they got their shit together." It's cool.

Joseph: So our first show was March 17th, 2004, in Bakersfield with Mirah, TJO, and Liarbird.

Dave: Yeah, Shaggy pretty much booked that show. It was fucking rad.

Shaggy: That was one of my first ones. I mean, not that they really wanted us to play, but I booked the show, so my band played, you know? (*Laughs*)

Dave: The turnout was really good and the response to our first show was phenomenal. I didn't expect people to like it but they really, really dug it.

Joseph: So our first show was there in Bakersfield but because of my ties through school, our second show was in Santa Cruz. I think that having that happen with our second show being out of town, it gave us a sense of wanting to have this band get going from the beginning. So shortly after that we recorded our demo with our friend Beaux. Shaggy and Dave were booking a lot of shows at a clothing store some friends of ours opened up called Gigantic.

MRR: Yeah, I like that space.

Joseph: So they were booking shows and we would often play. Then in the fall we started talking about doing a 7", which we recorded in—I think it was January of '05.

Dave: It may have been December.

Joseph: I'm pretty sure it was January.

Dave: Yeah, that's right.

Shaggy: You sound like a married couple.

Joseph: Well you just sound dumb. *(Laughs)*

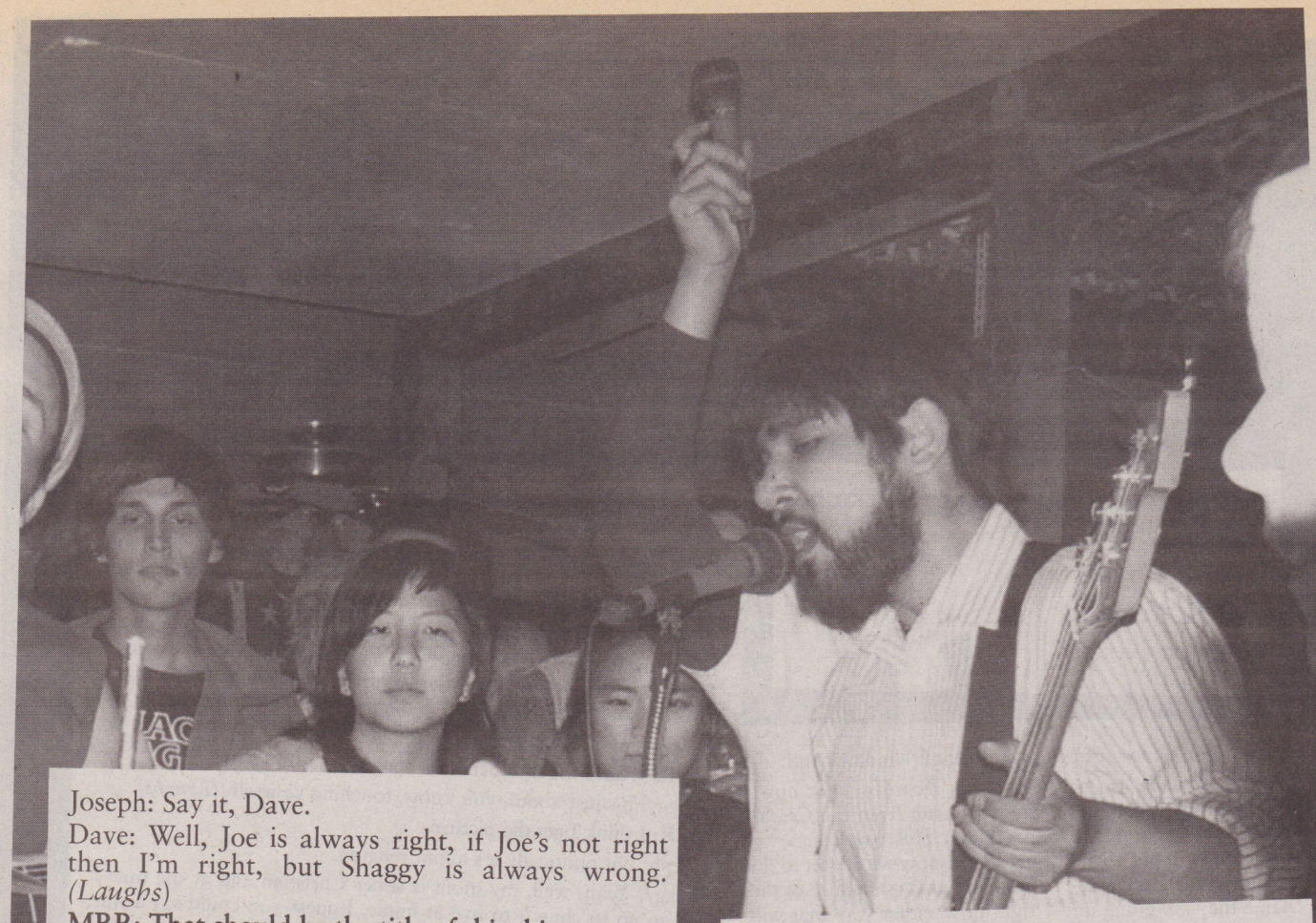
Dave: I guess this would be a good time to tell everyone about the one rule of Hips.

MRR: What's the one rule of Hips?

Shaggy: This is being edited out.

Joseph: No it's not.

Shaggy: Fine, I want the world to know you guys are assholes. *(Laughs)*



Joseph: Say it, Dave.

Dave: Well, Joe is always right, if Joe's not right then I'm right, but Shaggy is always wrong. *(Laughs)*

MRR: That should be the title of this thing.

Shaggy: Fuck you guys. *(Laughs)*

MRR: So tell me more about Bakersfield. What was it like growing up there?

Dave: I moved here just as I was turning a teenager. We did all kinds of shit; we had to make it up though. I don't know, like, uh, go to Wal-Mart and fuck shit up, play with the toys, harass customers. *(Laughs)* There were shows to go to, the music community was busy back then.

Joseph: I think Shaggy and I had similar experiences living in suburban neighborhoods but often venturing outside of Bakersfield into more rural areas. My grandpa had property with horses and cows, and her dad had land. I loved it.

Shaggy: Yeah, playing with goats, we had a cow. I learned a lot about doing things for myself, survival type stuff.

Joseph: I started going to shows about the same time as Dave. At that time I remember witnessing a lot of violence, just about every show. It's scary when you are thirteen and every time you turn around someone is getting their faced punched in.

MRR: Those were the hardcore shows?

Dave: No, back then everyone showed up at a show. It was a very diverse crowd but that may have been why there was so much conflict and aggression. Every show had punks, hippie punks, skaters, skinheads...

MRR: Skinheads?

Joseph: Well even then, skinheads, racist or not, were less harmless than the meatheads who had no agenda, or political standpoint, they just came to shows looking to knock someone in the head. Bakersfield had a lot of turmoil back then.

Dave: Yeah, coming from LA, moving here made me really aware of racism, classism and differences in people. Coming from a poor suburb of LA County, there was none of that really. It wasn't in my face like it was up here.

MRR: How would you say that's changed?

Shaggy: Now skinheads hang out with indie kids and all the people that play music.

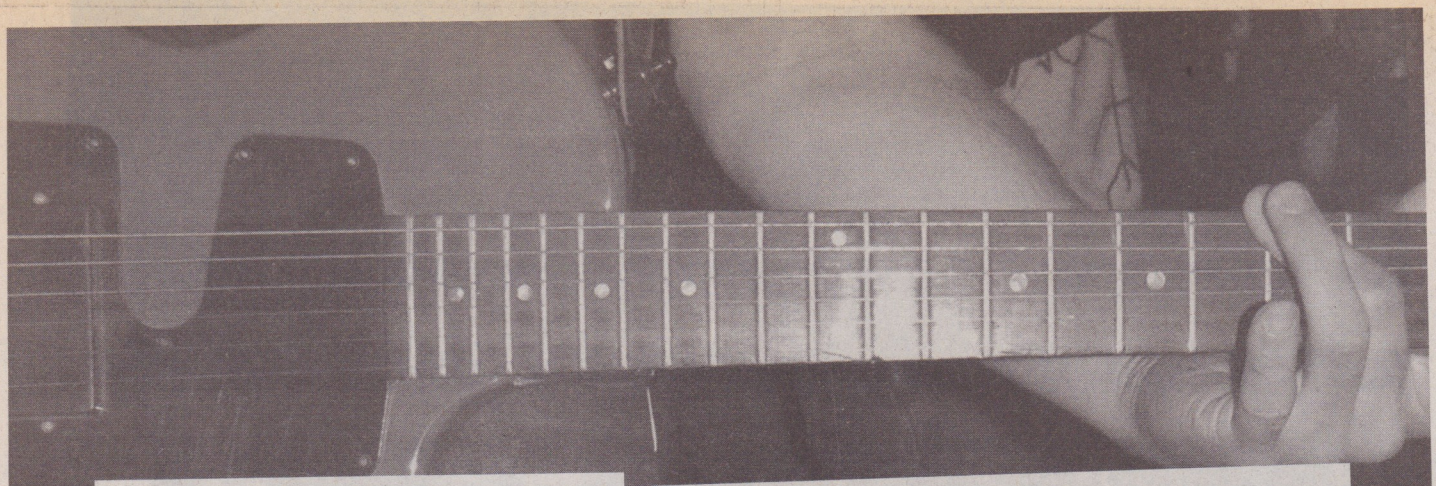
Joseph: I think when you find yourself thrown in together you just make friends regardless of personal choices like being a punk or a skater or whatever. Eventually the bad seeds die off and bridges get built. There's a lot of progressive stuff going on now.

Dave: Yeah, it's way different than it was ten years ago.

Shaggy: Bakersfield has a sort of tight-knit community. I mean, when we played a show it was with the same kids who were at every show. All the kids are in bands together trying new things starting new projects. Like if you need help with your bike or learning how to do something, you knew who to ask. If you wanted to record your band, one of your friends had a four-track. So pretty much everyone is helping everyone out.

MRR: So you have a 7"...when did that come out?

Joseph: It was recorded in January of '05, then it just took a little while for us to get money together and then our friend Ronald, (who) does a record store in Bakersfield called Going Underground Records, he helped us put it out. Finally in June we had a release party at the Camp, which is some property Shaggy's dad owns north of Bakersfield. We played with our friends Mika Miko from LA and some local favorites the Black Jerks, Boxes, and Emora.



MRR: So are you going to work on a full length?
Dave: Album?
MRR: Yeah.
Shaggy: No.

Dave: I don't know if this is a full-length kind of band.

Joseph: Actually, we have ten songs recorded right now. We had recorded eight songs with Jason from the Cereal Factory in Oakland in March 2005, plus two songs we recorded with our friend Beaux. Right now we are set to do a split with a band some friends do but I'm not sure of the name they are going under right now, either way that will be out in late March of this year. Then we may have another EP coming out, right Dave?

Dave: Yeah, we are talking to our friend Greg right now. He is looking to put out some records and we have stuff ready to go he might end up just doing ours.

Joseph: Just got word that we will be doing a split 7" with the Epsilons, this band from Long Beach. We are talking to them about a West Coast tour in June and The Smell's record label, Olfactory Records, is supposed to be putting it out.

Dave: Yeah, some stuff is in the works.

MRR: So, this band has a lot of political tones to it...

Shaggy: We weren't really going for anything in particular in regards to themes for the band but we're all like-minded people that have similar reactions to the stupid shit going on around us.

Joseph: I am no poet, so early on I just wrote about stuff that bugged me, as opposed to—

Shaggy: Petty shit. *(Laughs)*

Joseph: Exactly.

Dave: Lately I've become more of a personal writer, and Joe and I had similar experiences dealing with shit growing up, going to shows. That stuff has always affected me and shaped how I saw what was going on. I feel like if you are not doing anything with a message, then it's pretty gratuitous—why are you doing it?

MRR: That's an interesting point; I was thinking about all these bands recently that were totally ripping off Gang of Four sonically but not really content-wise.

Dave: Right. That's also why I was insistent on putting a lyric sheet in with the record.

Joseph: It is kinda small but that's because I was making sure that it got done cheaply and partially because I was timid about having people read the lyrics for fear I was sounding like a total ass. *(Laughs)*

Dave: Also, I just wanted people to move, first with their hips and then with their heads I guess. Maybe that had something to do with the picking of the band name.

Joseph: So I sang initially because Shaggy couldn't and Dave wasn't ready to, but by the time we recorded at the Cereal Factory, Dave was singing on the majority of the new songs. Oh, and we wrote a song Shaggy sings on and Dave takes over on drums.

Dave: Yep, the masturbation song.

MRR: What's the masturbation song?

Shaggy: It's just about, you know, touching yourself. *(Laughs)*

MRR: I think I get the picture.

Joseph: But politically it's about religion.

Shaggy: Yeah, well, my mom is super Christian and at the time I had to go to church to live at home, I guess you could say I was guilted into going. The song is about being put in a cage for wanting to explore myself and not having to live by the guidelines for what a woman can and can't be sexually.

Dave: Being from Bakersfield, which is a pretty conservative place, and having someone like Shaggy in the band who is a great musician, female, and queer is a statement in itself, especially for a place like this. Maybe other girls will see that and take the initiative.

Joseph: And that's one thing about Bakersfield I don't think we've mentioned yet, and that's due to a number of things like the affordability of real estate and stuff, people have the opportunity to get a band together, book a show, open a record store or a clothing store and just make things happen. I think it's something Hips has always tried to encourage from the beginning, you know, just get things moving.

Shaggy: Now that Joe and I are living in San Francisco it's a lot harder to afford some of the things we want to do and there isn't even a practical all-ages space right now in the city. But in Bakersfield nothing is provided, so people are DIY, they are taking the initiative.

MRR: Any last comments?

Joseph: Yeah. Our 7" is available at goingundergroundrecords.com or from us at shows. You can contact us for any reason at hipsmusic@hotmail.com. Look for several new releases and a West Coast tour in June.

Dave: Oh, Bakersfield now has a zine library. People can get in touch with us if they want to submit stuff.

Shaggy: Thanks, George, for the interview.

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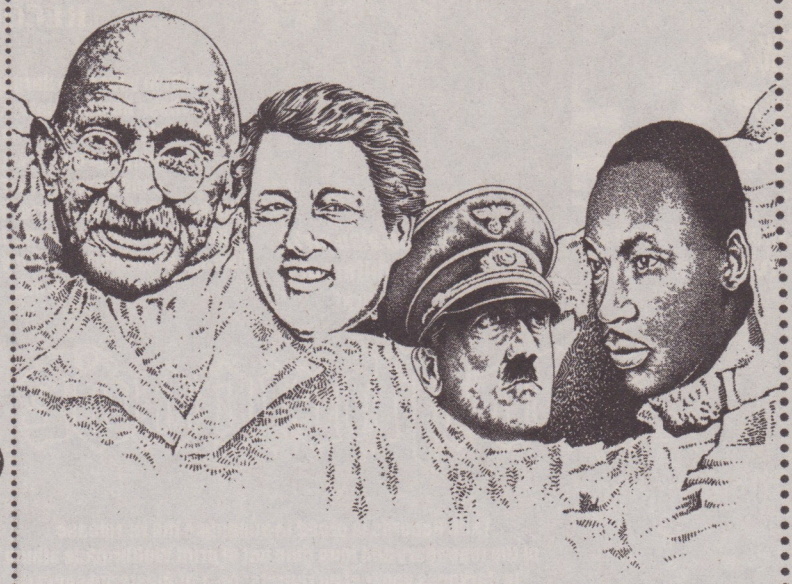

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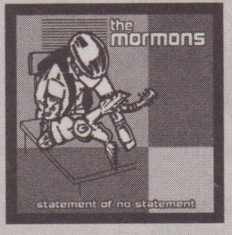

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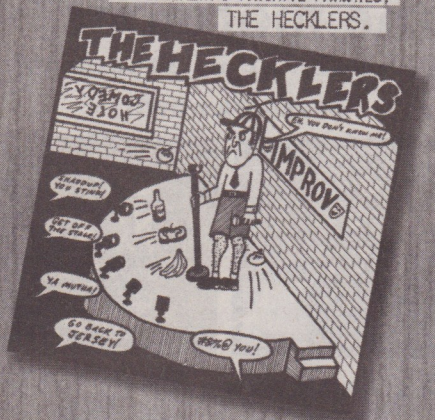

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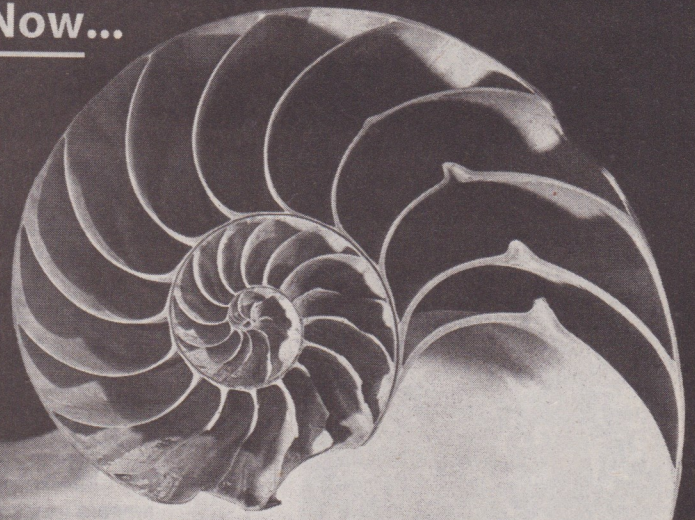

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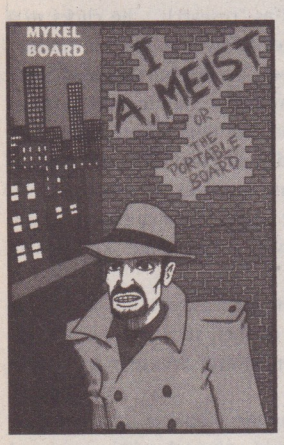

I, A Me-ist: or, the Portable Board
Mykel Board
383 pages • $15.95
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Mykel Board's columns scared the hell out of me when I first picked up *MRR*—always talking about sketchy sex in exotic places, and gleefully throwing around words like *negress* and *antifeminist*. Most of *MRR* was written in code to my 14-year-old eyes—pages of ads, classifieds of records I never even knew existed. Much like the way my first show at that skate park in Northern Virginia (Scream and Corrosion of Conformity?) was *intense*—all the older, leather-jacketed punks smirking and asking me for cigarettes.

The rituals aren't so alien now, but I still can't get through Mykel's columns. The same way I can appreciate GG as a cultural bomb, but who wants shit and piss thrown on them at a show? The real world does that enough for free. Here and now though, in book form, Mykel's artless style makes more sense. Or is at least easier to swallow or sidestep like some glistening NYC goo. Further, the idea (and reality) of writing a monthly column for two decades is daunting in whole other ways.

The Portable Board collects the better of 20-odd years of Mykel's *MRR* columns, with a bit of commentary before each. The broad (and, *no*, not that kind of broad) categories are: Age, April Fools, Music, Politics, Sex, Travel, and Other Topics. If you don't know by now (which would be odd since this review is in the same zine as his column), his pieces are written with "one main purpose: piss off the readers. Later that changed to 'piss off the readers with something I believe.'"

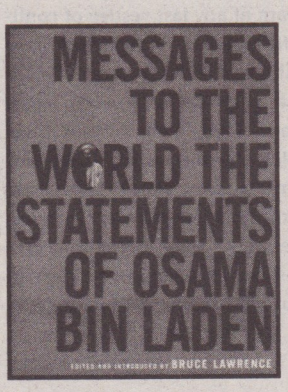
A typical column starts with an Ed Anger parody: "more frustrating than a beautiful lesbian" or "happier than an anarchist in a bomb factory." Writing itself is likened to "a good beer shit." Start with *My Date with Camille Paglia*. The column moves from a crowded, hip club to attempted conversation with the more famous, more notorious writer, to then getting kicked out of the anarchist gathering for drinking, and on to the maddening speeches at the queer tactical meeting. Which is pretty damn funny, and just another day if you believe in the cult of personality of columnists.

The best piece has to be his biographical statement from Martin Sprouse's *Threat by Example*. Mykel's first-person riffing through the early counter-cultural scenes, then to liberal colleges and interning with straight-faced English anarcho paper *Freedom* is a hoot. His disillusionment with the campus radical and sell-out hippie styles reads like a smarmier take of William J. Craddock's *Be Not Content*.

More often than not though, the sweeping, reactionary tone gets in the way. Or there's just not enough detail, both of which might be inherent limitations in column writing. Why did the man give up pot for beer, which he refers to as "the really good stuff"? More importantly, it would be a disservice to all to overlook Mykel's views on pederasty, meat eating, and freedom: *"My morality is consistency. There are NO exceptions. If sex is good, then why isn't it good for kids? If it's right for animals like lions and tigers to follow their instinct and eat their fellow animals, then why isn't it right for humankind to do the same? If genders are equal, then why choose a sex partner based on one or the other?"*

Punk lets us re-invent ourselves, complete with new names and superhero costumes. Such freedom manifests in odd ways—Sid Vicious's Nazi armband or spitting as some sign of appreciation. I understand the slippage of time and urgency of life, but how can any male advocate "run your hand over that passing butt"? Total saxophone and totally wack. And what's up with the awkward title, *I A, Me-ist? [Editor's note: The title on the cover has the comma miplaced—it should read:* I, A Me-ist.*]* Or the awful colors of the book cover? Or his lionizing of the very worst noir writer, Mickey Spillane? Now that I'm all worked up, I'm sure Mykel is happier than a fly in an open wound. Needling in every way—he did it his way to the very long-winded end.

—Travis Fristoe



Messages to the World: The Statements of Osama Bin Laden
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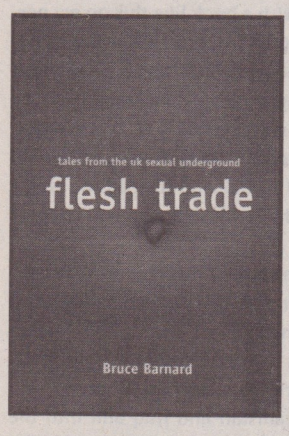
You, dear reader, can imagine my less-than-contained anxiety at finding a book with this title in my mailbox the day before leaving on a cross-country plane flight. Being discovered with a book like this on my person anywhere within a mile of an American airport would surely mean a one-way ticket to the little white room with no windows and maybe even a visit from the good Dr. Cavity Search. With such images stinging my brain, I shoved the offending text as far into the depths of my checked bag as I possibly could, hoping that it would slip by unnoticed and that my luggage would indeed meet me again at the baggage carousel in Oakland instead of finding its way to the JFK incinerator with so many other anti-American nail clippers and cigarette lighters.

That the book ended up winning me over in spite of this mounting resentment is a testament to the care taken in bringing this collection together. What you get is the full (not excerpted) transcripts of twenty-four of bin Laden's public statements, from the infamous videotaped speeches to interviews with Western journalists, presented chronologically beginning in 1994 and progressing up through the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and into the present day, with exhaustive annotation. Bruce Lawrence, in his helpful and informative introduction, remarks that though bin Laden has acquired quite a bit of international fame/infamy for his periodic proclamations, "his voice has been tacitly censored, as if to hear it clearly and without cuts or interruption would be too dangerous." Such an assertion begs the question: in the absence of any kind of accurate portrayal of the figure, what kind of portrait is this book meant to construct for the reader? Which bin Laden are we getting? It is rather clear from the tone of the introduction and footnotes that the editor approaches bin Laden as a kind of revolutionary, one whose means

are most certainly horrific, but who remains attractive for Muslim youth seeking ways to "liberate their homelands." This is not to say that Lawrence and translator James Howarth are bin Laden apologists, for they are always quick to point out rhetorical and ideological inconsistencies; instead, they merely take pains to illuminate the actions of the West which would lead someone like bin Laden to the mindset he ends up adopting. In doing so, Lawrence and Howarth bring together a wealth of background information through their annotation, giving important historical and biographical details that put the statements in context, and helpfully citing bin Laden's numerous Qur'anic quotations. The translation itself is rendered in eminently readable language, assuring that though bin Laden's statements often read as "scriptural in mode," as Lawrence puts it, the rhythm is never lost and the reading is never the slow slog it could be.

Bin Laden's own voice, ever-present, comes off appropriately confounding, reading at times like a typical leftist academic, at others like Pat Robertson or Mel Gibson's relentlessly anti-Semitic father, all fire and perdition. Such seemingly abrupt shifts in personality and rhetoric, utterly unreadable on any Western political spectrum, often occur within two or three sentences. He takes American imperial ambitions to task, as I'm sure most of us would, but he also remarks with equal ease that we (of the USA) are all a bunch of sinning practitioners of "fornication, homosexuality,...[and] gambling" and consumers of "intoxicants." The effect of reading such a thinker, one who cannot be so easily categorized, is a literary journey that is truly conversational and thought-provoking in the most sincere way. The reading of bin Laden's addresses becomes fundamentally active, and more like a discussion then a passive intake of one man's philosophizing. Sometimes said discussion has some harrowing consequences, namely the death of any last vestige of confidence in the intelligence of United States officials, who very clearly have absolutely no idea of what bin Laden actually thinks. The US government conceives, in its War on Terror, that it is fighting a winnable battle, with victory occurring when we vanquish the enemy. For bin Laden, "victory is not material gain; it is about sticking to your principles," a surefire recipe for war without end, which we can happily look forward to at the start of this brutal new year. Apart from some consciously repetitive bits (effective as rhetorical strategy, but not perhaps as easy reading), *Messages to the World* does precisely what it sets out to do, and in the process proves a step forward in an academic dialogue surrounding the state of our world today. Not necessarily beach reading, but incalculably valuable.

—Max Tremblay



Flesh Trade: Tales from the UK Sexual Underground
Bruce Barnard
191 pages • $17.95
A Critical Vision Book
www.headpress.com

Flesh Trade is an exposé on the underground UK sex industry. It addresses the history of British sex law, and also details current characters in UK prostitution, porn movies and magazines, the 18+ Internet, phone sex, sex shops, STDs, and various fringe sex practices like "bukkake" and "dogging". Bruce Barnard not only gives life to the people involved in UK's sex trade but he inserts himself into the narrative, giving the book a personal voice, Hunter S. Thompson-style. It is not sex like the media typically examines sex—clinically conversational—it is sex like it should be, personally involved.

The introduction of the book lays out Barnard's obviously liberal stance towards pornography dating back to his days as a prolific teenage wanker. Immediately he warns that he will not only delve into the deviant world of sex trade for journalistic purposes but he will also participate in it whenever possible. His missives on all that he witnesses are not only honest and personal but also vivid and uncensored. He does not actually act in an adult film but he does spend time on sets and partying with the cast for days at a time. He does not become an escort but he does operate a gay phone sex number. He does not film any un-rated (and therefore illegal) pornos but he does help distribute them from the trunk of a car.

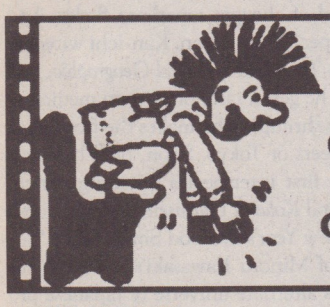
Though not a trained psychologist, Barnard still arrives at some profound conclusions about the human condition and how it relates to porn. He himself admits that after a yearlong submersion in the world of smut he began to see everyday life as a big porno setup. This is exemplified when, during the middle of his 24-hour porno-thon (performed as "research"), he clicks to a religious healing channel and realizes only after a few minutes that nobody is going to get naked. Conversely, those who feel porn encourages irrationally violent and sadistic behavior in all who watch it should take note of Barnard's observation regarding the British Board of Film Classification. The BBFC examiners are made to watch hours and hours and days and days of across-the-board sex films submitted for a rating approval, yet few ever seek the support of the offered therapist. Even after weeks of watching every type of sex imaginable complaints of feeling "depraved or corrupted" are notably rare.

"Pornography may not benefit society to any great extent, but neither in my opinion do fast-food restaurants, alcopops or shell suits, and I don't feel the urge to vilify people who go shopping for Bacardi Breezers dressed in leisure wear."

This book succeeds on so many levels. Its subject matter is inherently titillating but Barnard's good-humored and intrepid approach adds a personal element that makes the whole investigation more honest and genuine.

—Craigums

MOVIES



BRING ME THE HEAD OF GENE SISKEL

CAROLYN KEDDY

I LOVE MY LABEL

It is that post-holiday month known as January and as per usual there are no films I want to see. I have some extra time and would like to see some movies, but I just can't bring myself to see **King Kong**. Sorry, Hollywood. The lack of films does not deter me though. I have decided to revisit some films I've seen in the last couple of months but never got around to reviewing.

First up is **Fresh Fruit For Rotting Eyeballs**. If you thought this must be a documentary about the Dead Kennedys, you're right. This short documentary comes with the "special 25th anniversary edition" of the DKs' *Fresh Fruit For Rotting Vegetables* CD. I had a demented desire to see this knowing that the original members of the band don't get along, what with the lawsuits and all. I figured there could either be a lot of shit talking or maybe just some awkward silences. Either way, I figured it would be interesting. After tracking the review copy through many hands of the *MRR* staff, I sat down and watched it.

There isn't any shit talking, but there is the obvious absence of singer Jello Biafra and drummer Ted. So you get one half of the story of how the Dead Kennedys got together and how they went about recording their first album. Also interviewed is Dirk Dirksen, the legendary San Francisco club booker who gave the band their first show, the band's former manager Chi Chi and Ninotchka, Jello's ex-wife. Then there are some weird people interviewed that don't really seem to have anything to do with the story. For example, writer/critic Craig Rosen who I didn't know so I looked up on the Internet. He wrote a book about REM and another about *Billboard* hit records. There's also writer/radio host Johnny Angel, who I know from growing up in Boston because of his bands The Thrills and The Blackjacks, Erik Himmelsbach, who wrote a book called *ROQ Of Ages*, I assume about the Los Angeles radio station though I couldn't find anything about it. I wonder why they didn't interview anyone involved in the San Francisco punk scene then or now. Angel at least was involved in music at one time and he had a story about seeing the Dead Kennedys at the Rat in Boston. He recalled that Trudie of the band Bound and Gagged beat the crap out of Jello at the show. As for the others, they just seemed to have general insights into the band that anyone who knows about the Dead Kennedys probably could have made up.

The most interesting part of **Fresh Fruit For Rotting Eyeballs** is Biafra's run for Mayor of San Francisco in 1979. I remember this happening and thinking it was great that a punk would run for Mayor and come very close to winning. Biafra finished in fourth place. What I didn't know then, but have become aware of since moving to San Francisco, was that Biafra ran for Mayor following the assassination of Mayor George Moscone and Supervisor Harvey Milk by another Supervisor Dan White. The city was thrown into chaos when White was acquitted by what is now jokingly known as the Twinkie Defense. Among the platforms Biafra ran on was putting up Dan White statues around the city which citizens could throw eggs at to relieve tension. There is some great footage from news reports of the Biafra campaign, showing Biafra and his supporters walking down the streets holding signs and having a press conference at City Hall.

Fresh Fruit For Rotting Eyeballs also includes a lot of footage of the early days of the band. You see the band playing at the Mabuhay in San Francisco. Jello is spitting out the lyrics to "California Uber Alles" while people on the front row try to hand him joints. Near the end, he takes one that he pretends to smoke and tosses over his shoulder.

Ironically, it is Biafra who is the star of **Fresh Fruit For Rotting Eyeballs**. Even though there is no interview with him now and he no longer sings for the reformed band, he is hard to eliminate from the Dead Kennedys legacy. (www.manifesto.com)

Then there is the Stiff Records documentary **If It Ain't Stiff It Ain't Worth a F*!#**. This short film was apparently never released but somehow a copy ended up at my house. It follows the Live Stiffs Tour 1977 which featured Elvis Costello, Ian Dury and The Blockheads, Nick Lowe, Wreckless Eric and others while they toured England in a bus. It is obvious why this never got released, but it's the kind of band documentary I like to see. Here they are acting stupid, getting drunk and high, making sarcastic remarks to each other and—in Elvis Costello's case—being pissed off the whole time.

If It Ain't Stiff It Ain't Worth a F*!# features live performances that seem way over the top. Since there are two drummers on the tour they both play at the same time. Which is funny to me, but kind of obnoxious too. Although, nothing is as obnoxious as Nick Lowe's double neck bass/guitar. Every time I see him on stage with that thing or walking to the stage with it, I laugh out loud. What a stupid idea and yet how punk at the same time, especially because you never see him playing the guitar part, which makes it seem like he thought it would be really obnoxious to use that as his bass.

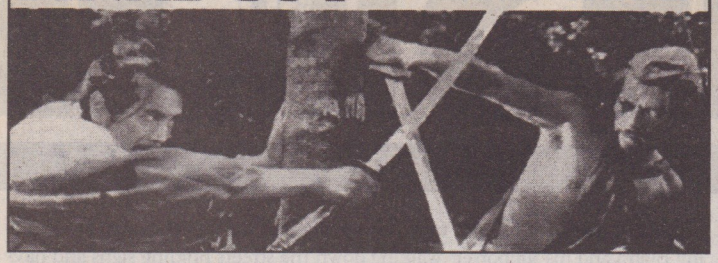
That brings up the obvious discussion raised by **If It Ain't Stiff It Ain't Worth a F*!#**. Are any of these guys punks or were they just latching on to a new trend to make some money? Most of them were guys who had been in the music business for a while, but I'd still have to say they were punks. Nothing different here than what you see in the footage of the Sex Pistols and The Clash on a tour bus except for how they look. They aren't wearing punk clothes, no one has dyed hair and some even have long hair. Yet, the songs are definitely punk. It is great seeing long-haired, mirror-sunglassed Larry Wallis singing "Police Car." There is no question when I see Ian Dury limping through the hallways of the backstage area followed closely by his motley crew of Blockheads. When he passes Elvis Costello and tauntingly says, "Go on Elvis," I don't doubt it for a minute.

My boyfriend Mike says everyone had to get into punk some way. When punk started either you went with it or you didn't. He is glad these people chose to go with punk. I am too because this is a very enjoyable film. Hopefully, you can find a copy of **If It Ain't Stiff It Ain't Worth A F*!#** somewhere.

While writing this column I got a call from my friend Mary Galli in Boston to tell me she just saw **New York Doll** at the same time as Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney. As they were leaving the theater a woman yelled out, "Kiss my ass Romney." Funny, but what I wanted to know was why the Governor was seeing that movie. I know he is not that cool. "He's a Mormon," Mary told me. Ah, that makes more sense.

I am always looking for films to review. If you made one, send a copy to me c/o *MRR*, PO Box 406760, San Francisco, CA 94146-0760. Email me at carolynmrr@juno.com, if you have a film screening in San Francisco. I will go see it.

FINAL CUT BY STEVEN SPINALI



SQUID-FEST

As Japan's championship Super Pro wrestling match draws to a close, Koji Taguchi (Akira) has his opponent groaning in the invincible reverse-inverted full nelson, guaranteeing the world belt. As a few Shinto priests knowingly watch on the sidelines, the victory becomes short-lived. A giant white squid in lace-up boxing shoes (Osamu Nishimura) snatches away the belt, and nobody can handle the irate cephalopod. After pulling Taguchi into a tentacle lock and a Northern Light Suplex lock, it becomes clear that this raging invertebrate may be the reincarnation of Kan-ichi Iwata, the legendary pro wrestler who had only a short time before he succumbed to a vague terminal illness.

Thus begins **Calamari Wrestler**, probably the most peculiar film of the year, directed by Minoru Kawasaki, a man who dubs himself "the Japanese John Waters" — except, he adds, he knows how to make movies.

No better way, then, to show off your talent than to make a feature film about the travails of a pro wrestling giant squid.

Miyako (Kana Ishida), the calamari's long-lost former girlfriend, strongly suspects that somehow, behind the slimy exterior lives the soul of the wrestler she loves. The sports writers assume it's true, and the bigwigs at the top of Japanese Pro Wrestling Federation are certain about it, though nobody seems to have a explanation how it happened. "Whether he's a human or a squid," Miyako's best friend confides, "he's still Kan-ichi."

Yes, he's still Kan-ichi, except that he's six feet tall, smells like the ocean, and has bowl-sized eyes surrounded by folds of angry-looking squid flesh.

As Kan-ichi/Calamari patches things up with his former girlfriend, they start living together. The relationship is formalized in a movie coup: the first sex scene between a sea creature and a human since the forgotten classic **Humanoids from the Deep**. And that's when the troubles begin. As it transpires, Kan-ichi was able to fight off his generic terminal disease by changing species and observing the practice of Buddhic desireless-ness. After a night with Miyako, he wakes up shivering in the middle of the night—as a human again.

"Will you perish as a mere desire-ridden terrestrial," a wrinkled priest incants at the Kan-ichi's training ground at the temple, "or will you endure the rite of 365 points?" The rite apparently involves standing under a gigantic bronze bell as it's rung repeatedly until the victim achieves a state without desire. (This state of mind apparently only applies to sex, not ambitions to be a top pro wrestler. Religion has always been fickle with its rules, *so-de nè?)* At this point, Kan-ichi is probably as confused as most of the people in the theater watching the film. But by now, **Calamari Wrestler** has itself undergone something of a metamorphosis, dragging the sports film, the superhero genre, and the Shinto religion into its satiric blender-mix.

The match at Kanagawa Ultra-Arena is as bizarre as it is unexpected. Who, if anyone, can beat the Calamari Wrestler? Of course, it would have to be Taguchi; he's been training in Pakistan, where after weeks of training with esoteric masters, he's changed into an octopus. "A Calamari and Octopus double-decker," the announcer cries. "What a seafood special!" The next sequence is a triumph of Japanese rubber-suit technology.

And the movie's only half done.

To enjoy a film like **Calamari Wrestler**, it helps to have an appreciation, or an affection…or maybe just a tolerance for good, old-fashioned trash filmmaking. America has long since adopted computer generated effects and massive budgets for even the most modest indie film. On the other hand, **Calamari Wrestler** comes from a country that still treasures the adolescent thrills of having rubber-suited opponents fight to the death, and unless you've been properly primed with a diet of **Kikaider**, **Ultraman**, **Godzilla**, **Gorgo**, and maybe **Gamera**, you might give up on it for its sheer weight of silliness.

That a movie like this could actually be made isn't even the issue. **Calamari Wrestler** is a natural in Japan, where adults routinely read anime comics, and the top grossing films include animated dramas. It's not that you're lowering your standards by watching a film like **Calamari Wrestler**; it's more that you're opening your mind to a different way of enjoying the movies.

For his part, director Kawasaki is gradually building a reputation as an auteur (if that term applies) in the world of cheapie superhero flicks. And there's never a shortage of superheroes, especially in Japan. Kan-ichi wins the match and the girl, gets cover articles on *Time* and *National Geographic*, and is mobbed by fans wherever he goes. And he gets a taste of his own medicine; he's accosted by Squilla (a gigantic mantis shrimp), who makes the front page by decking Calamari Wrestler on the streets of Tokyo. Soon, he'll have his match with the crusty crustacean in the first interspecies wrestling match. Playing directly against NHK-TV's year-end *Kohaku Utagasen*, people choose instead to watch "the Squid vs. Squilla New Year's Seafood Smackdown."

For those who haven't had enough of Minoru Kawasaki's madness, his next film**, Kabuto-O Beetle** continues his alternate universe of Japanese pro wrestling. It stars a man-sized beetle, and even has a catchy theme song. Conceptualized by anime writer Go Nagai (the brain trust behind the massively trashy **Cutie Honey**), it features a screenplay by Takao Nakano (**Sumo Vixens, Parasite: Killer Pussy**).

Kawasaki's very latest is the story of a hardworking Japanese salaryman who finds he's a suspect for murder. His name, and film's title is **Executive Koala**. From the little information I've been able to glean from reviews, the key to the koala's exoneration may lie with his boss (a life-size rabbit) and a bartender frog.

Clearly, when the Japanese set out to make trash, it's on a level of its own.

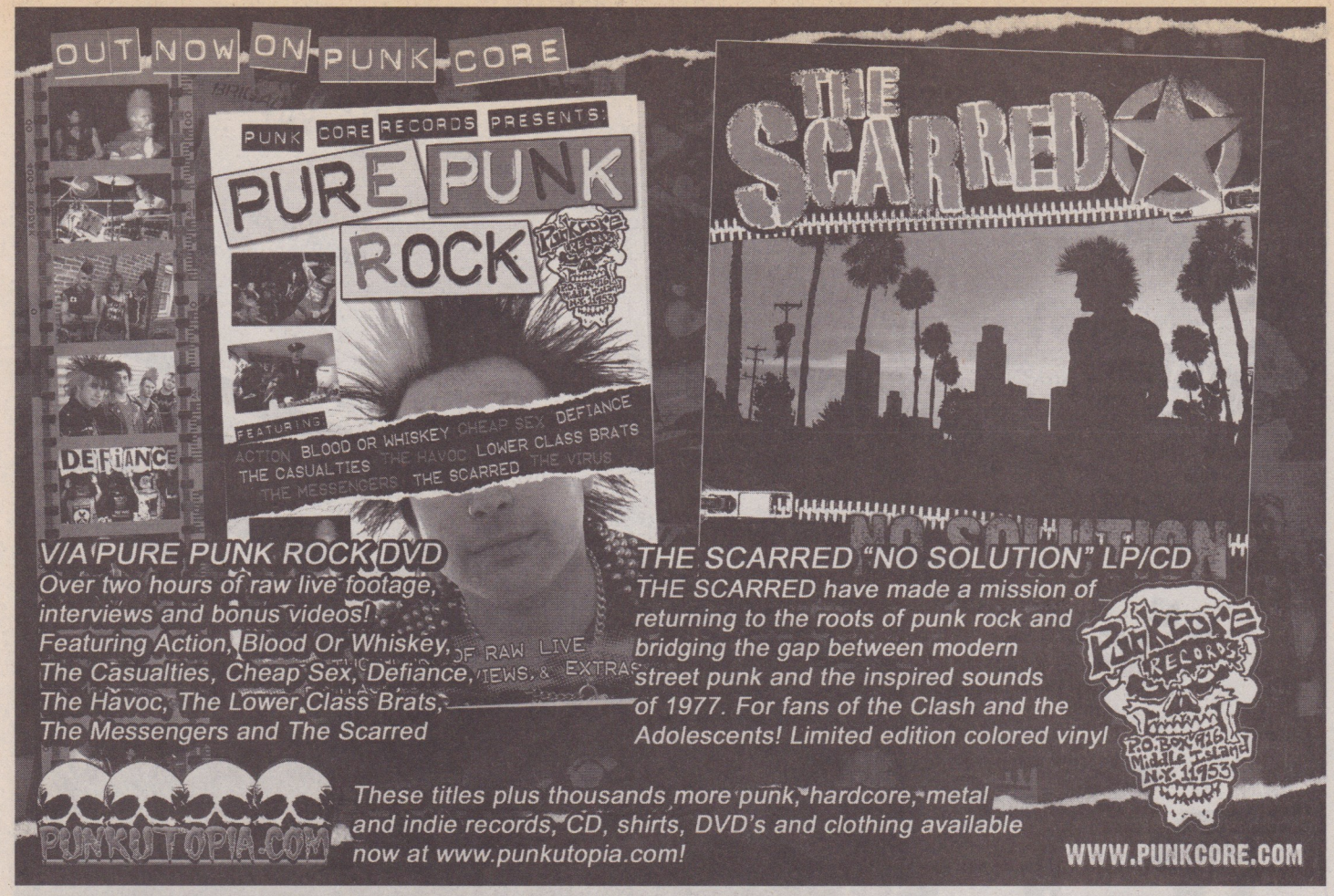
Wong Kar-Wai's **2046** is a classier variety of science fiction, and takes exactly the opposite tack of **Calamari Wrestler**. **2046** is generously highlighted by computer-generated images, which is surprising, since it's essentially a human drama. But it's also a completely unique, eye-catching film that pays more attention to style and emotions than strict logic.

In the future, vast interconnected tracks connect all destinations, and many make a train ride to 2046 to escape the pains of the present. Although a sizable amount of people have traveled there, no one has returned. Except for Chow Mo Wan (Tony Leung), that is, a rakish writer who has created this future world to reinvent his own past. But 2046 also has a secret meaning to Leung: it's the room next to his where a former lover was savagely murdered.

All of Wong Kar-Wai's films are photographed by Christopher Doyle, whose visual style surprises with its drenched colors and unique scene framings. Everything is shot in widescreen, but the action usually occurs only in a small slip of the celluloid's canvas; the rest is blocked out by curtains, walls, mirror frames, and rising stairways. As a result, many of the images, even the drab ones, have a particular beauty and intensity that magnifies real life. The idea is that even the moments in our personal history that we throw away have a quality that gains in beauty as time passes.

Wong Kar-Wai's work enjoys an international reputation, and recently he won the honor of being the first non-European to be elected as head of the Cannes Film Festival jury. It's plain to see why they like him so much. His reliance on character and film technique over plot clearly favors the French philosophy toward film. Some have claimed that Wong Kar-Wai's filmmaking, with its loose, almost improvisational feel, mirrors the French style.

This is especially the case with his celebrated **Chungking Express**, which rates as one of the Hong Kong greats. Both **2046** and **Chungking Express** are about time and love, but **2046** doesn't deliver on the high concept as proficiently as his best work. It's spectacular to look at (as are all of this films), and has top-flight performances all around—particularly Gong Li as the call girl who commands Leung's affections. But there are times when you feel it's more a directorial showcase, and the film's showiness and complex editing hide a basic simplicity. It's a good film, but it could have been great.



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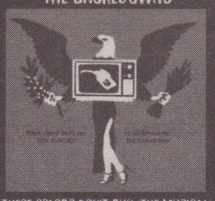

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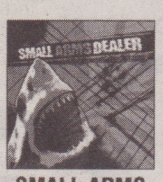

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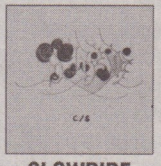

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MICHAEL PARENTI

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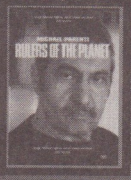
Award-winning historian and author Michael Parenti delivers his on-target observations based on historical facts, of America's tendencies towards creating a world empire, in spite of our democracy at home and democratic movements abroad. Also includes an intimate look at how he became one of the most well known academic troublemakers of the Vietnam era!



The Knights of The New Crusade

Knight Beat

Combining a furious garage punk assault with an uncompromising and literal devotion to the Holy Bible, the Knights of the New Crusade are without a doubt the most divisive band in both the Christian and punk rock circles.

Has Jello's taste for the extreme gone off the deep end?

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I OBJECT

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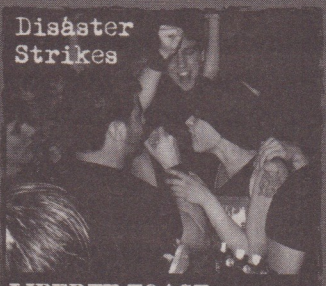
Disaster Strikes



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Disaster Strikes have crafted their own unique brand of punk and hardcore since their formation in 1999. Singer J.R.'s life experience as a full-time union organizer infuses the lyrics- comparable to lyrics by Jello Biafra or MDC at their height-with truth and political edge that can't be bought at Hot Topic.

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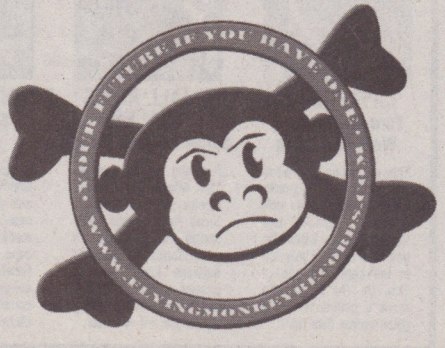

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RECORDS

Send 2 copies of vinyl or CD-only releases (if on both formats, please send the *vinyl*) to **MRR, PO Box 460760, SF, CA 94146, USA**. We will review everything that falls within our area of coverage: punk, garage, hardcore—no major labels or labels distributed by major-affiliated distros. Please include postpaid price and contact information. Let us know where your band is from! *No reviews of test pressings or promo CDs without final artwork.* Send demo tapes and CD-R-only releases to Erin Yanke, PO Box 1113, Portland, OR 97207.

Reviewers: Tim Brooks (TB), Mitch Cardwell (MC), Rob Coons (RC), Carl Cordova (CC), Paul Curran (PC), Andy Darling (AD), Dr. Dante (DD), Sean Dougan (SD), Nic Eagle (NE), Jonathan Floyd (JF), Jeff Heermann (JH), Vince Horner (VH), Layla Gibbon (LG), Chris Hubbard (CS), Kenny Kaos (KK), Carolyn Keddy (CK), Ramsey Kanaan (RK), Will Kinser (WK), Elliott Lange (EL), Ray Lujan (RL), Hal MacLean (HM), Allan McNaughton (AM), Golnar Nikpour (GN), Bruce Roehrs (BR), Ken Sanderson (KS), Martin Sorrondeguy (MS), Steve Spinali (SS), Brian Stern (BS), Ryan Wells (RW), Shane White (SW).

3TARDS – "Crystal Balls" CD

This here's some "over the top," juvenile and obnoxious metal/hardcore. I can almost hear them all giggling over their dick and sodomy jokes. They've got the metal down, with lots of energy and well-placed guitar solos but "Manrapist" is absolute crap. This "asscore" shit will probably be big amongst the suburban heshers. (HM)
(Wounded Paw, 1 Atlantic Ave, Suite 105, Toronto, ON M6K 3E7, CANADA, www.woundedpaw.com)

5 TORQUAYS – "Boys are Boys / There She Walks"

Before the legendary MONKS, there were these guys. Well, it's the same guys really, just a year or so earlier, knocking out two monster mid-60s garage tracks that have been bootyfied several times and are pretty much the gold standard for the era when it comes to primal lunacy. If you have any brains at all you probably wouldn't like these tracks, so it's strictly a no-brainer, pick this up. Way better value than those frickin' $12 STOOGES 45s. (RW)
(Munster, www.munster-records.com)

ABC WEAPONS – "Process of Decay" LP

An impressive and expansive six-song LP from Australia of FROM ASHES RISE/TRAGEDY/HIS HERO IS GONE-style hardcore with structured melodic and metallic low-end drudging. Complex arrangements, ripping musicianship, scalding, crusty, and slathering throaty vocals, screaming high note changes on the guitars, requisite pick slides, oppressive heaviness, and bleak lyrics. Pretty awesome with blazing delivery and inventive guitar solos that push this far ahead of the pack of folks doing this sound. Killer!!! (KS)
(Endless Blockades, PO Box 3023, South Brisbane, BC QLD, 4101 AUSTRALIA, endlessblockades_orders@yahoo.com)

ADAMANTIUM – "Traditions" CD

Remember those jocks that beat you up in high school, or at least tried to intimidate you with their gigantic muscles and tiny penises? Well, they started a band, but instead of being tough they developed an emotional façade, and some sweet inner beauty. Crap metal breakdowns, crap metal productions and horrible whiny screamo vocals only further sealed the deal that no punk would ever like their music. Kick boxing and karate enthusiasts immediately realized that this would be great exercise music and a great way to demonstrate their machismo, thus eliminating the chance that there would ever be any female participants at their shows. (WK)
(Indecision, www.indecisionrecords.com)

AGE – "Four Wings" LP

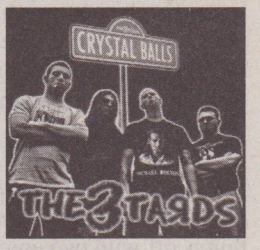
AGE has really outdone themselves this time around—a stunning speed metal crust classic. This record has so many artificial harmonics and palm mutes that you will think you died and went to headbanger heaven. The lyrics are surprisingly really descriptive and well translated to English, which seems to be a big problem for a lot of Japanese bands. It's nice to hear this band sound good again after the atrocious AMEBIX cover album on Crust War Records of all our favorite bands destroying the classics. Any fan of this genre will do well to pick up this record. (WK)
(Whisper In Darkness, PO Box 40113, Portland, OR 97240-0113)

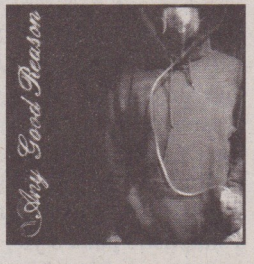
THE AGE – "Through Those Years" EP

Vegan youth crew straight edge from Poland. Fast, catchy, and melodic in places, not unlike GORILLA BISCUITS. The vocals especially remind me of Civ (not CIV, mark you!). For what it's worth, this is the best straight edge 7" I've heard in a while, but I can't honestly say I keep up with the latest in SE stuff… (AM)
(Commitment, Klein Muiden 38, 1393 RL Nigtevecht, NETHERLANDS, www.commitment records.nl)

ALL HEROES – "Bite the Bullet" CD

Hailing from my former quasi-stomping grounds, Concord, CA, these nuevos sound like everything on





Vagrant and some stuff on Victory. Not quite pop punk or emo but the songs do have a sense of drama with some chops in the mix. A bit uneven but this does have a certain charm. (RL)
(Kupocore Music, allheroesmusic.com)

AMONG THE MISSING – "Disorder of the Templar" CD

One thing these UK stoners get right (and there're plenty others) is the live to eight-track production, which achieves a perfect balance between clarity and raw noise. Everything is super heavy and natural and you can plainly hear everyone beating the living shit out of their respective instruments. This is perfect heavy rocking metal with a hardcore influence, most immediately comparable to a noisier, less polished version of the most recent HIGH ON FIRE; a stoner/doom metal band rekindling its love for pounding hardcore tempos. Or maybe like an un-ironic KARP at its fastest and heaviest. Every song has at least one great riff or two, there's unfailing intensity throughout, and they even cap things off with two epic doom numbers that comprise half the album's length. Definitely one of the better releases this month. (EL)
(Withered Hand, www.w-h-r.com)

ANTEENAGERS MC – "Let's Not Have a Party" EP

This EP marks the return of France's ANTEENAGERS MC, which features members of some of that country's best bands—OPERATION S, STEVE & THE JERKS, and the NO-TALENTS. There are four great songs here with very different, though complimentary, styles. "Let's Not Have a Party" is almost an anthemic oi tune with a very strong bass line and screamed vocals. "Blue Steel" is an instrumental with a simplistic punk style. "Les Conformistes" sounds very French *punque* and is my personal favorite. "Cars" sounds the most modern in the new style new wave. This is a great record. (CK)
(Plastic Idol, www.plasticidolrecords.com)

ANTIGAMA – "Zeroland" CD

Third full-length album from this Polish wrecking ball of manic futuristic grind. Riffs slash and sear with surgical precision, tempos give DISCORDANCE AXIS a run for their money, and the jagged chaotic song structures and distorted vocals suggest BRUTAL TRUTH at their prime. Throw in plenty of noise texturing and a ten-minute closing sound collage of weirdness and you get another killer effort from this great emerging group, which hopefully will net them some well-deserved attention. (EL)
(Selfmadegod, POB 46, 21500 Biala Podl., POLAND, www.selfmadegod.com)

ANY GOOD REASON – CD

With this CD you get nine songs of powerful hardcore from this Italian band. They mesh together modern hardcore with a metallic crunch (that occasionally reminded me of STRIFE) and lots of melody to boot. They easily flow from fast and furious to upbeat melodic breakdowns. And the vocalist has a solid scream that does not overwhelm the music. In all honesty, I got a little bored by the end of the CD, but I would still consider it a solid release. (RC)
(www.anygoodreasonhc.tk, hdrecords@hotmail.com)

A STEP APART – "Structure" EP

OK, I really think Carl Cordova should have reviewed this. We have a total crew thing going on here—I am bored to fucking death with this style. Again and again, contemporary straight edge bands have continued on their never-ending quest to come up with the most amazing breakdown, but I stopped listening about 1,200 records ago. Will somebody please destroy the mold cuz I really don't give a fuck! Lyrics? What you would expect. Artwork? What you would expect. Music? I really don't need to go on. Despite my saying all this, the kids who love this shit will buy the $25 sweatshirts and try to get every mail-order colored-vinyl version of this band's record. Have fun spending Mom and Dad's money. (MS)
(Not Just Words, www.njwrecords.com)

BATHTUB SHITTER – "Angels Save Us + Mark a Muck" CD

Two great out-of-print 7"s from everyone's favorite turd loving Japanese grinders get the CD repress treatment and the world is no doubt a better place for it. These are, in my opinion, two of the better releases from the bowel bathers, as well as two of the more difficult to find—particularly *Angels*, as it was released by a Cyprus record label. As always, this has plenty of BS's trademark amazing vocals, lyrical wisdom, and blasting beats, but it's worth it for a couple gems alone: 1) the hand-clapping cheerleader chant of the BATHTUB SHITTER theme song that opens the record, and 2) the odd, repetitive discordance of the eight-minute "Mark a Muck" title track. Includes a REGURGITATE cover and a bonus live comp track. (EL)
([S]Hit Jam, www.bathtubshitter.com)

BLACK LIPS – "Does She Want / Stoned"

Yup, this is one of them cheap-instrument-playing lo-fi garage bands...!!!! That's what they is alright!!! I saw them play live the other night and they're all young and cute…if Danny Fields was in the audience he would've surely had his way with them…one at a time while I watched and jerked off and snorted poppers…!!!!!! This particular little record ain't too bad…I like their spunk…literally!!!!!! (SW)
(Slovenly, PO Box 204, Reno NV 89504, www.slovenly.com)

BLACK LIPS – "Hippys / Born to Be a Man"

A perfect companion piece to their fantastic *Let it Bleed* album, recorded in the midst of a surely wild European tour. With KING KHAN at the helm, the fun factor increases dramatically and the proof is in these two acid-laced bouncers. Sure, the familiar subject matter of dope-smoke nostalgia and good-time misbehavin' are ever present, but the mood is lighter and more fun than their most recent outings. Well worth the import PayPal tomfoolery you're gonna have to go through to score a copy. (MC)
(Varmint, www.varmintrecords.de)

BLOTTO / THE BECAUSE – split EP

Each band does one original and one cover of their favorite Bay Area superstar band—BLOTTO submitting a basically identical version of a CRIMPSHRINE song with inferior singing and the BECAUSE giving their interpretation of a JAWBREAKER song. I wouldn't go so far as to say they made it their own, but their version is a nice take on one of JAWBREAKER's best songs, "Do You Still Hate Me?" The real saving grace of the record is the BECAUSE's original—it's a work of pop-punk perfection. (AM)
(Snuffy Smile, 4-1-16-201 Daita, Setagaya-Ku, Tokyo 155-0033, JAPAN)

DIE BÖSLINGE – "Oaschpartie" CD

DIE BÖSLINGE formed in 1979, making them among the first wave of Austrian punk bands, and in 1981 they released the *Scheiss Kibarei* EP, a minor classic of early European punk and an expensive staple of collector want lists for the next two-plus decades. In recent years, their classic stuff has been given the reissue treatment, finally making those excellent and underappreciated early recordings available to the masses. This CD, on the other hand, features a reformed BÖSLINGE, and is a self-released album of new material. BÖSLINGE version

2.0 plays pretty straightforward Euro street punk with a very clean recording and decent songs. There are a couple of memorable sing-along moments (well, if I knew what the hell they were singing…), though there are some boring, plodding moments as well. It doesn't have the immediate charm or youthful punk edge of the first EP, but it's certainly not bad either. Its worse offense is the stadium rock sound of the guitars; the catchy punk songs would actually be pretty great if the guitar was less obnoxiously overproduced. (GN)
(Boeslinge, c/o Erwin Brandlhofer, Bechardgasse 22/16, A-1030 Wien, AUSTRIA, www.boeslinge.at.tt)

BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICITY – "Invisible" EP

BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICITY is an all-star melting pot of Texas blues-punk raunch and Pacific Northwest mod noise. Take the trademark Texas guitar fuzz/scuzz of Alex Cuervo (FEAST OF SNAKES) and slather it atop of a booming, noisy rhythm courtesy of folks from TRACTOR SEX FATALITY and MANIKIN. An oddly effective combination, and deserving of multiple listens. More please. (MC)
(Super Secret, PO Box 1585, Austin, TX 78767)

BRUNT OF IT – "Certain Uncertainty" CD

This is the second (self-released) CD from these punk skasters. The ska is merely in some of the rhythms. There's not an undistorted note in there, and they specialize in some aggressive melodic hardcore, with a fine lead guitarist. They're about as ska as NOFX, or the current incarnation of SUICIDE MACHINES. Like both aforementioned outfits recently, their lyrics seem to often address the political too, which is a plus. Well worth seeking out. (RK)
(www.bruntofit.com)

BULLETS IN – "Conceive" 12"

Political post-hardcore. This sounds like the old San Diego sound mixed in with a little Gainesville, by way of ENDSTAND/MANIFESTO JUKEBOX. It's all a bit too noisy and busy for me. Six tracks. (AD)
(Waking, 541 Clinton St. 2f, Brooklyn, NY 11231)

CATHETER – "Dimension 303" CD

Holy shit, this one's a demon. I loved CATHETER's last full-length, *Preamble to Oblivion,* and really didn't think they'd be able to top it. Was I ever mistaken—*Dimension 303* goes for the throat from note one and never lets up once. The playing on this is relentless—I don't think Haroldo stops blasting for more than a couple seconds at any time. Homes' arms gotta be tired. The other guys are pulling their weight too—the vocals, the guitars, everything is just unbridled intensity, and catchy as all hell too. I really can't say enough good about this, as it's definitely one of the best grind releases of the year (er, that is, of '05—oops!). (EL)
(Selfmadegod, POB 46, 21500 Biala Podl, POLAND, www.selfmadegod.com)

CEASE UPON THE CAPITOL – "Yelling Fire in a Crowded Theater" EP

Decent hardcore punk, similar to *Word as Law*-era NEUROSIS with a little bit more 90s slowness. While the music isn't anything to write home about, I have to give thumbs up to a booklet that has the lyrics in English, Spanish, and Japanese. If you think you have something to say, you might as well reach as many people as possible. (JF)
(I've Come For Your Children, 262 Barker Rd., Nashville, TN 37214)

CHINGALEROS – "Release the Apes" LP

Unlike most punk rock LPs, which are pretty straightforward—12 songs, two and a half minutes each—this is a bit different. This seems to be all about embracing our evolutionary roots. I'm serious. The sleeve, the lyrics, even the mood of the music. (It includes a full lyric sheet, by the way.) Musically, this is also a bit difficult to pigeonhole. It's mid- to faster-paced. It's driving. It's eerie. I like it now, but, honestly, I get the impression it's one of those records you have to listen to a few times before it all really sinks in. Very cool. (KK)
(Beat Generation, c/o Munster, Apdo 18107 Madrid, 28080 Madrid, SPAIN)

COLISEUM / DOOMRIDERS – "Not of this World" CDEP

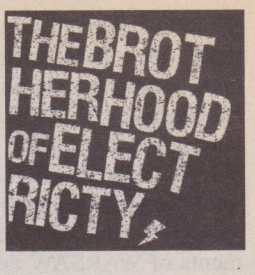
"A Salute to DANZIG" with covers by Louisville's COLISEUM, who delivers a brutal version of "Am I Demon," and Boston's DOOMRIDERS, who crank out a burly cover of "Possession," these book-ending original songs (two and one respectively) by each band. Killer, loose, live-feeling recordings capture the fury of each band, the originals by COLISEUM blasting faster with a rocked out FROM ASHES RISE-style fury on a heavy southern rock bent. DOOMRIDERS charge out a tough, fuzzed out sludge-bent rocker at hardcore pace. It's tricky company putting yourself in direct comparison to the seamless songwriting of classic DANZIG tracks but the bands hold their own and your interest, making for an enjoyable CDEP. (KS)
(Level Plane, www.level-plane.com)

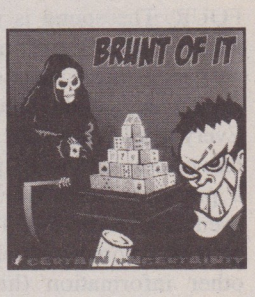
COUNTING THE DAYS – "Losing My Grip" EP

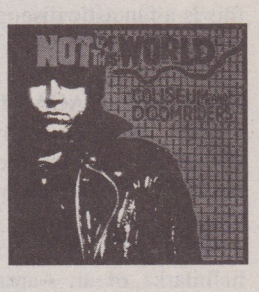
Here is the debut EP from this hardcore band from Maryland. If five songs of fast and aggressive hardcore in the vein of AMERICAN NIGHTMARE sounds like your thing, then you should pick up this one-sided EP. I actually thought this was really good, especially the fastest stuff. (RC)
(Burn Bridges, 2981 Falls Rd., Baltimore, MD 21228, www.burnbridges.net)

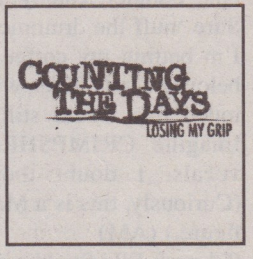
CRISIS – "Holocaust Hymns" CD

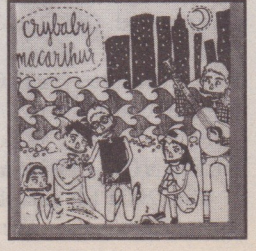
Pretty much identical in track listing to the CRISIS bootleg CD doing the rounds; this, however, is the real deal, as it's legit. *Holocaust Hymns* has all of this seminal late-70s band's recorded material (three 7"s and a 12") along with some demo and live tracks. In my mind CRISIS was one of the truly underrated











first-wave punk bands. Along with WARSAW, they spearheaded the way for the dark, almost gothic anarcho bands (MOB, ZOUNDS, UK DECAY, etc.) and later bands like the CULT, DEATH IN JUNE, and SEX GANG CHILDREN (the later two featured CRISIS members). The music is bleak and tense and certainly features elements of WARSAW and WIRE (especially in the later 12"), and even early GANG OF FOUR. The sound is most defiantly *punk* rather than arty post-punk but the sparseness gives the band a sound very different from many of their punk contemporaries. Every track is fantastic, although the 12" is less palatable to many punks as it is clearly a precursor to where the band members eventually ended up. The CD comes complete with some great photos, but there is no other information (history, lyrics, etc.), which is a shame. That minor fault aside this is a fantastic discography and a mandatory purchase.

CRYBABY MACARTHUR – "BPF" EP

This band is really into being from Brooklyn. Despite the borough's hipster boom of late (surely over by now?), I can definitely dig their enthusiasm—it's a pleasant place, at least to visit. This has the hallmarks of an Aaron Cometbus project (neat artwork, comes with a cut-and-paste zine booklet, catchy yet raw singalongs). Sure 'nuff the drummer's called Aaron and I'm betting my coffee money that it's our beloved Mr. C. Even without Aaron's magic touch this would still be a great record. Imagine CRIMPSHRINE with tuff gal vocals. I doubt they're on MySpace. (Curiously, this is a Manhattan address. Go figure.) (AM)
($4 ppd: Ella Steinberg, 344 W. 72nd #8A, New York, NY 10023)

DEAD RADICAL – "Rottenness" EP

These Scranton, PA, maniacs drop a one-sided 33 RPM 7" (yikes!) full of raw, naïve, and irresponsible blasting riffage with high screamed (teetering on screamo) vocals, seemingly having some fun with what they do. Scrape out the illegitimate "emo" slow parts and cow-punk bridges (explore "Crib Death" for a painful blend of the aforementioned) and you essentially end up with a decent fast hardcore (for the fucking fastcore) record. (BS)
(Plaster Cast Label, I Deal, 180 Rudgate Rd., Colchester, VT 05446, plasterthrash @gmail.com)

DEFIANCE – "Rise and Fall" LP

This 2004 LP gets the pic disc treatment for its Euro press. Are picture discs punk? I'd have to say no, they're just…uh, lame. I'm glad that DEFIANCE exists though, and I love where they are coming from: ONE WAY SYSTEM for the new millennium with a million studs. Would I listen to this record? No, because I prefer their older stuff. If you're down with the Punkcore thing, though, this band is better than most and certainly has been at it longer. (TB)
(Dirty Punk, BP 10302, 59666 Villeneuve D'Ascq Cedex, FRANCE)

DELAY – "Jumpstart My Heart" CD

13 tracks of scrappy melodic punk tunes that bring to mind that East Bay sound of bands that Aaron Cometbus drummed for—CRIMPSHINE, PINHEAD GUNPOWDER, et al. Enthusiastic, fairly infectious, and with that emotion-on-the-sleeve appeal patented by AGAINST ME! Folks that dig the quirks and catchy riffs of the aforementioned will be suitably enamored with this, I'll wager. (RK)
(www.midwestrock.org/delay)

DELTA 5 – "Singles & Sessions 1979-81" CD

Sure, Kill Rock Stars hasn't put out an interesting record by a new band since like, 1994, but their CD excavations of the late-70s Rough Trade catalogue (KRS having given discography treatment to KLEENEX/LILIPUT and ESSENTIAL LOGIC before this) have all been much needed and well done. DELTA 5 had a pretty distinct musical identity, featuring many of same kind of bass-heavy (they have *two* bass players) dance punk grooves and art-school left-consciousness that GANG OF FOUR—and the MEKONS, who shared a member with D5—is most well known for, only this band is topped off by cheeky and repetition-prone (in a good, post-punk way) female vocals. This CD features their three singles (the best song is "Colour"), songs from three different Peel Sessions (great, of course), and some live stuff, but nothing from their LP. A lot of this late-70s British post-punk stuff has been championed in the 00s by the worst kind of hipsters (with the worst kinds of haircuts), but that really shouldn't scare you off if you have even the slightest taste for the adventurous in your punk rock, or if you ever found yourself enjoying, say, RED MONKEY. Well, maybe it should scare you off because D5 can be described as "disco punk," but it's good, I swear! Unless, of course, your answer to the eternal question "How much art can you take?" is "Absolutely none." The CD insert is thick, but a bit hard to read. This band had a pretty cool aesthetic, and I would've liked to see their art more prominently featured in the insert for this reissue. Oh well. Overall verdict: recommended. (GN)
(Kill Rock Stars, www.killrockstars.com)

DEPRESSION / FLESHRIPPER – split EP

I've seen this split around a lot lately. The grim wizard on the cover is what really had me interested but when I was listening to this I was a little let down by the lack of grimness. DEPRESSION plays mid-tempo death grind with CARCASS-worship vocals and a few really annoying high vocals. The guitar player has a really bass heavy tone that would sound fucking killer if DEPRESSION was a black metal band, but they aren't so forget it. FLESHRIPPER pumps out two gore-soaked songs on their side; not unlike DEPRESSION they stay mostly mid-tempo but throw in some blast beats here and there. I think I even herd a cow bell some where in the mix. The vocals are the usual Cookie Monster lows trading off with high screams. That's it. (NE)
(Morbid Reality, 341 N. Gifford Ave,. Los Angeles, CA 90063)

DISEASE / ULTIMO PRESO – split EP

Who knows if this record is being distributed much outside of Spain, and the weird fantasy-psychedelic art and unreadable band names aren't going to help its cause in the distro bins it does hit. But, fuck it, this is one of the best records of the month based on the DISEASE side alone. Not a straight-up Dis-clone (though they probably have DISCHARGE records in their collection), DISEASE plays aggressive and rockin' hardcore, somehow managing to capture the drive of MOTÖRHEAD (who they cover here) along with the melody and guitar-driven fury of some of those Portland-by-way-of-Memphis bands. There is more of a classic punk feel on their three originals, though, than that description may imply; this record is thankfully devoid of "epic-ness" of any kind. The real standout track is DISEASE's second song, a mid-tempo neo-classic which pays much tribute to their criminally underrated Spanish melodic hardcore forbearers. Embarrassing story: I was on my third or fourth listen to their side of the EP in the kitchen here at MRR HQ and, thinking no one was home, I was headbanging kinda hard, orange juice in hand, fist in air, when in walked an alarmed shitworker (whose identity I will protect here), an unsuspecting witness to my dork-out. I guess that's what happens when fifty people have keys to your house. But I digress. DISEASE rules. Oh, ULTIMO PRESO is on this

record too—they play fast, sloppy, poorly-recorded, hoarse-throated, blast-beat ridden thrash/grind that I would give a bad review to if I wasn't so enamored of the other side of this split. Track it down for yourself and for your distro! (GN)
(Trabuc, PO Box 160, 46740 Carcaizent [Valencia], SPAIN)

DOOMTOWN – "Forever Fucked" LP

There's no two ways about it, our surly Portland-by-way-of-Memphis pals spawned a million imitators, and here's another rifling straight from the FROM ASHES RISE/TRAGEDY school of down-tuned guitars and wailing guitar leads. Gruff vocals, heavy-as-fuck sounds, quasi-political lyrics, and that typewriter font just seem like deja vu to me. That being said, this rips. I couldn't give a fuck about originality, so if the blueprint is a good one, go for it. Tight, accomplished, and heavy make for a great combination… I'm in. (TB)
(Putrid Filth Conspiracy, Box 7092, 200 42 Malmo, SWEDEN)

DOWN TO NOTHING / ON THIN ICE – split EP

DOWN TO NOTHING hits it hard with some fast and furious straight edge hardcore with all the requisite backing shouts and breakdowns in place. They even have a song called "Go Ahead Wit' Yo Fake Ass." I can only hope that is a joke. ON THIN ICE, who is from the UK, slows things down a bit and goes more in the MADBALL route. Mid-tempo, metallic hardcore with occasional bursts of speed and growling, harsh vocals. These bands definitely have their niche, so if it sounds like yours then pick this release up. (RC)
(Grave Mistake, PO Box 12482, Richmond, VA 23241, www.gravemistakerecords.com)

DRUNK – "The Company Tie" LP

Fuck yes! I figured DRUNK was done and never to be heard from again, so it is with great joy that I get to review this new LP. DRUNK consists of members from Norway's vastly underrated LIFE…BUT HOW TO LIVE IT? and SO MUCH HATE, and follows a similar European melodic punk styling. Unlike their first couple of 7"s and split LP, DRUNK has sped things up on this release, yet lost none of their power. A definite top-tenner.
(Twisted Chords, www.twisted-chords.de)

DUDMAN – "Kaiho" EP

Grating and intense hardcore/punk from Tokyo maniacs DUDMAN. Spastic, skillfully executed, 80s style Japanese hardcore with welcome musical nods to the maniacal and brilliant GAUZE. Along with NK6 these guys tore the roof off Gilman St. in January. Hope to hear more! Great stuff. (BS)
(625, www.625thrash.com)

ED GEIN FASHION SHOW – "Bad Day At Life" CD

This trio explores indie and pop punk styles with their 12 melodic, mid-tempo tunes. They aren't afraid to include some filler or add a couple meandering, slow snoozers into the mix…this would be better as a four-song EP. By the end of the CD it's almost like background music. Even the dynamics are flat. I'm sure Ed Gein would appreciate a lot more edge and angst amongst desecrators of his name. (HM)
(Cabeza de Tornado, 203 1/2 Acaia, Huntington Beach, CA 92648, www.edgeinfashionshow.com)

ENDLESS FIGHT – "Back to the Front" CD

Burly, precise, and speedy "*hard*core" from Winnipeg. Guttural shades of the CRUMBSUCKERS' throaty and static vocals spewing "knife right in my back," "one more fight," "keep fighting," personal struggle-type lyrics. Pro delivery with fast precision drumming, chunky breakdowns that hit off groove parts, and riff-a-minute metallic guitars. The pro emphasis of this modern "hardcore" style, with it's slick metal-style production and it's faithful emulation here, hit me as somewhat static and sterile, but there's enough pummel and meaty mosh funneled through these eleven tracks for fans of the style to start dripping drool. (KS)
(Spook City, PO Box 34891, Philadelphia, PA 19101)

END TO END – "Dedicated to the Emotion" CD

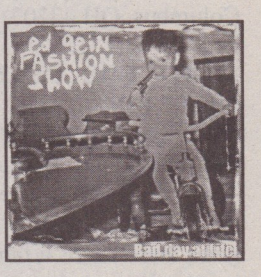
You might be asking yourself, why reissue a band that only recorded three original songs (the fourth being a forgettable live SSD cover)? If you have an appreciation for California straight edge hardcore like Dave Mandel does, then you should understand why he decided to pull a great band like END TO END out of the bargain bin of obscurity. Originally called ADDICTION, they changed their name to END TO END only after a few shows, and released 1,200 copies of their EP posthumously in 1990. Besides the original recording, the CD contains liner notes written by the vocalist, unpublished photos, and live videos of the band (with unreleased songs). Hopefully this band will finally get the attention and respect they deserve. (CC)
(www.indecisionrecords.com)

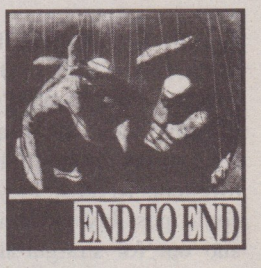
ESPASMODICOS – "Enciendes Tu Motor" EP

Urgent early-80s punk rock out of Spain, incidentally very similar in style to the bands that were comped on the *Bloodstains Across Spain* LP that came out in 1997. I have no doubt that the lyrics are political, but I am locked out by my piggish refusal to learn Spanish. Very solid stuff—not too wild, genre shattering, or fucked up, just punk rock. (RW)
(Radikal 1977, Apartado de Correos 81, C.P. 28921 Alcorcon, Madrid, SPAIN)

THE EXELAR – "Message from a Moving Target" EP

Contemporary hardcore out of New York, with an appreciation of the post-hardcore DC (Dischord) sound, played with enough bite and bile to be interesting to punks. Some heavy, waltz-timed, screamed vocal parts, but done right and with tone- conscious, layered playing and solid musicianship; head and





shoulders above most bands who attempt this hybrid sound. Including a lyric insert would have been a good move—it gets hard to take the sound of vocal conviction seriously with screamed (often indecipherable) vocals and no lyric sheet. (BS)
(Pogonophobia, www.pogrecords.co.uk)

THE FAVORS – "Long Live the Nubiles" CD

Laughably bad hard rock in the spirit of too many tattooed, has-been, buffoon combos to mention. Think every "professional" Sunset Strip bad-boy cliché and double the suck factor. There is simply no punk rock to be heard here, although I'm sure they'd beg to differ, brah. If you're into date-raping women behind sports bars in between platters of buffalo wings, this is right up your alley. (MC)
(Bush League, 187 E. Arcadia Ave., Columbus, OH 43202)

FIGHT FOR CHANGE – "Join the Fight!" EP

I'd like to preface this review by saying that without fail, I get at least one European straight edge EP for review every month. I am probably the only person at *MRR* that gives these bands a fair shake. I'm explaining this because I want to be perfectly clear when I say this band is the definition of cheesy Euro straight edge. Their hearts are in the right place, and the music isn't half bad (reminds me a lot of CHAMPION's older material). But I can only handle so much cheese, and unfortunately the generic lyrics and boring artwork pushes this record into "not-vegan" territory. Don't even get me started on the name of the EP… (CC)
(Commitment, Klein Muiden 38, 1393 RL Nigtevecht, NETHERLANDS, www.commitmentrecords.nl)

GOOD NEIGHBOR POLICY – CD

GOOD NEIGHBOR POLICY comes straight outta Santa Cruz and is trying to disprove their city's reputation as a haven for stinky, patchouli-scented Vanagon dwellers. To do so they avoid anything that could possibly be construed as hippie-ish and opt for straight-ahead, no-frills hardcore punk. The 13 tracks on this CD are pretty one-dimensional: chunky, fast guitar, clearly sung (but not sappy) vocals, and rhythms that go from medium-fast to fast. They're among a small group of bands trying to keep an underground punk scene alive in Santa Cruz, so we wish them luck with that. (AM)
(Lorelei, PO Box 295, Santa Cruz, CA, www.loreleirecords.com)

GORILLA ANGREB – "Long Island / Supersyn"

The frustrated sighs are almost deafening at *MRR* today, and the new outing from these much-loved Danish darlings is to blame. The fury of their previous work has completely vanished, replaced with a dreary blend of post-Dangerhouse X and ALLEYCATS rumbling brood. Dull. There. I said it. Not what I was looking for outta this lot, or anyone else really. I completely hated it on first listen, but now I've pretty much come to the conclusion that this is a mood record at (very) best. I've still got my ears open for their upcoming 12" though, so all is (hopefully) not lost. (MC)
(Spild Af Vinyl, www.spildafvinyl.dk)

GREGOIRE 4 – "Eternelles Compulsions" CD

Mannered and well-crafted French Fry space age rock, reminds me of some of the side projects of the HEADCOATEES crowd in the late 90s, being a more pop-structured take on pre-hippie mod sounds of the 60s (as opposed to a *Nuggets*-style raveup). The songs are really well put together, good enough to have come out on Little Teddy, say, and we'll play this one a few more times over the next month or so to check whether its got staying power. For now, it's a catchy keeper. (RW)
(no address)

GREGOIRE 4 – "Insouciance" CD

Four tracks of catchy, sweet, quaint 60-style beat and sorta-pysch. I'm told that there's a Tev Falco/PANTHER BURNS connection here (guitarist Grégoire Garrigues was in that band for a time, it seems), if that means anything to today's discriminating music consumer. Slick, fun, a little mannered for my dull tastes. (JH)
(Twin Fizz Ltd., 179 Great Portland St., London W1N 6I6, UNITED KINGDOM, www.gregiore4.com)

GREENLIGHT THE BOMBERS – "American Executive" CD

This is old school noise/emo. This sounds like a mix of FUGAZI and HELMET with D. Boon of MINUTEMEN fame singing. A five-song EP that definitely has its groove. This reminds of the early days of grunge and noise circa 1992 when music was ugly and damn proud of it. (RL)
(Pencil Neck, greenlightbombers.com)

GUNNER HANSEN – "Village Idiot" EP

Hold on to your jock strap you fucks! GUNNER HANSEN from Ontario, Canada, is coming at you fast and furious! These crazed punkers get into your face immediately with "Fuck Your Feeling." Rough, speed-laden punk is the currency here. These guys have a negative attitude and they are going to share their displeasure with your hapless ears. Inside the record it says, "Fuck everything," and that summarizes the whole angry mess. The screaming vocals accompanied by the brute-force guitar assault on this EP push the music far into the danger zone. This EP is clearly not safe! On the song "Rats" GUNNER HANSEN rants about the human condition: "Fucking maniacs / Diseased and full of shit… / This race must be an accident… / An end is what we need…" This is a great EP! Buy or die! (BR)
(Audiofellation, 251 West Ave. N. Hamilton, Ontario L8L 5C8, Canada, www.audiofellation.com)

HATED PRINCIPLES / GORGONIZED DORKS – split EP

I assume this is the old grind band HATED PRINCIPLES, and if so then *what the fuck happened*? No, just kidding (sorta). I love a good raw recording but this thing sucks. Every snare hit feeds back and they do 24 fucking songs plus a CRIPPLE BASTARDS cover on a one sided 7". All the songs run together—you can hear no change whatsoever. GORGONIZED DORKS are in the same boat with the super raw recording—you can actually hear the tunes but there's nothing that's super striking about them. Oh well. One other thing—more of a pet peeve actually—is that I hate with a passion a shitty layout done on some janky-ass computer. This thing is so fucking pixilated I can't read a damn word on it. I don't know what label put this out and I don't know any of the bands' info or anything because of this shitty ass layout. (NE)
(Argomosh, ben_agromosh@yahoo.com)

HATRED SURGE / INSECT WARFARE – split EP

These two Houston grind outfits waste no time and follow up their respective 625 7"s with this great split. I might even go so far as to say this is both bands' best so far, if only because of the clarity of the recording. INSECT WARFARE in particular really benefits from a clearer sound, allowing you to make out what each guy in the band is doing at mach ten speed and insane heaviness. As for the vocals, I would've sworn they were pitch-shifted had I not seen him execute 'em dead-on live. One-man (plus one woman) band HATRED SURGE belts out a half dozen tracks of straight DESPISE YOU worship, complete with shouted female vocals and all (plus the

guy's wearing a DESPISE YOU T-shirt in the photo, in case you're deaf). Equally intense as the flip side on all counts. I can't believe this guy does all the instruments himself. Absolutely great stuff from both. (EL)
(RSR, c/o Sandro Gessner, Strasse des Friedens 45, 07819 Mittelpuellnitz GERMANY, skrupel@web.de, http://mitglied.lycos.de/skrupel)

HAYRIDE TO HELL – "...And Back" CD

Yet more horror-inspired psychobilly from the US's premier psychobilly label. Sounds like all the other shit to me, ELVIS meets the MISFITS. Yawn. (TB)
(www.psychobilly.us)

HELLBATS – "Dark 'n' Mighty" CD

This French trio describe themselves as psychobilly, and are on America's premier psychobilly label (for what that's worth). But aside from the stand-up bass, they're pretty straight melodic horror rock. Certainly a lot more early MISFITS, or even DEAD KENNEDYS-esque surf, than the METEORS, for sure. As such, they're several deep cuts about the usual psycho fare. (RK)
(Hairball 8, www.hairball8.com)

THE HELL – "Black Maria" CD

I am probably totally off in saying this but it reminds me of a thrashier REATARDS. It's got that California early 80s thing somehow—it's kind of AGENT ORANGE/DI or even the DKs, but is super garagey too. The logo is a take off on the DICKS and the lyrics are snotty and pretty funny too. A plethora of well-written songs about stabbing and merciless high school decimation. This is awesome. I totally would listen to this again and would love to see these Alabama punks play live. (LG)
(Chad, 317 Caplewood Dr., Tuscaloosa, AL 35401, hellalabama@gmail.com)

THE HELM – "The Second Term" EP

Limited EP on white vinyl from this Seattle band featuring ex-members of UNDERTOW and CHAMPION; these six tracks, however, are dark, downtuned thrash book-ended by epic tom-pounded heavy intros *a la* UNION OF URANUS. While retaining that dark edge, the thrashier parts are more straightforward with throaty vocals and political lyrics assaulting the Bush administration. Minimalist but artful packaging including lyrics makes for a solid debut. (KS)
(Hanging Hex, www.hanginghex.com)

HERESY – "1985-1987" LP

Essential! The thrashin' speedcore origins of the UK's HERESY, one of the highlights of the mid-80s UK metallic-crust-meets-Boston-hardcore scene, *a la* early Earache records and HERESY's practice space roomies CONCRETE SOX. Scathing vocals, metallic flourishes, and—where the Boston HC influence shows itself most—the rushing drums, these genre-defining 19 tracks include their first demo, the *Never Healed* flexi, additional demo recordings, and the elusive, ridiculously limited *Thanks* EP, which is less rough hewn and savage, akin to their split LP with CONCRETE SOX without the massive recording. Great (and I'd argue the band's best, or at least the most over the top) material fills out a gatefold with tons of photos, extensive liner notes, and lyrics. The HERESY demo was a paper route classic for me when it came out, slinging papers off my bicycle in the hot Alabama sun and jamming it on my Walkman at maximum volume. 20 years later this still sounds like an all right way to spend an afternoon. Ripping! (KS)
(Boss Tuneage, PO Box 74, Sandy, Bedfordshire SG19 2WB, UNITED KINGDOM)

HORRÖR – "Progresu" EP

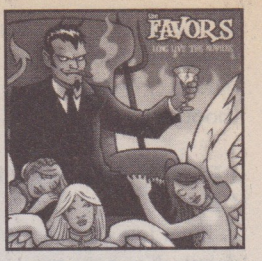
Four tracks of rock riff heavy, speeding, modern in a dirty attack of MOTÖRHEAD/AVSKUM-style rock/hardcore. 80s-sounding, clean, echo-y vocals shouted in Spanish make this straightforward Barcelona band unique. It's a bizarre effect akin to some of the stranger recordings of early Swedish hardcore. The riffs are basic, making this straight-up, solid, and driving punk, with lyrics addressing animal rights, environmental destruction, and one "horror" track with the lyrics, "Blood puddles search for your mother." Comes packaged in a nice foldout sleeve with lyric translations. Cool. (KS)
(Oscura Sonrisa, Silvia P. C/ Romei 6I 08500 Vic, Barcelona, SPAIN www.oscurasonrisa.cjb.net)

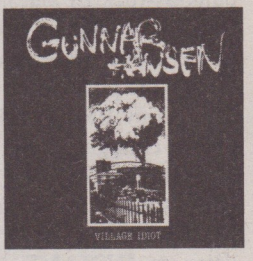
HUNCHBACKS – "Don't Touch At My Records" CD

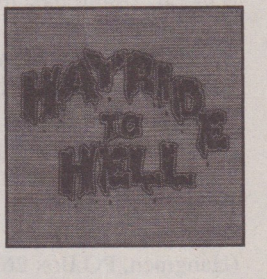
St. Etienne punk rockers crank up the pace and volume with their second release. A knockabout jamboree mixing some nifty '77-inspired punk with a rough, but not muddled, garage production. The terrace chants are here in full retro glory, sometimes hitting the dizzy heights of vintage ANGELIC UPSTARTS. My only gripe being that they sing in English, obviously unaware how much the ladies love a French accent. (SD)
(Dead Dog, 12 Rue Marceau, 42700 Firminy, FRANCE, www.hunchbacks.net)

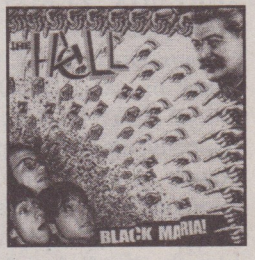
HÜSKER DÜ – "Ultracore – Backstage Tucson, AZ Dec. 28, 1982" LP

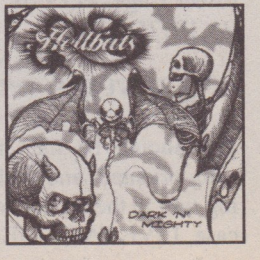
Given the poor sound quality of this boot you'd be forgiven for thinking it actually *was* recorded from backstage, but that's actually the name of the venue for this 1982 show. The track listing for this set is pretty much unbeatable, but the recording could make for a fairly disappointing listen. To be honest, live HÜSKERS recordings are usually pretty blown-out due to the sheer volume the band used to perform at, and I tend to get into it despite (or maybe even partly because of) the added layer of filth on the sound. I'm a huge fan of their entire output, though, so maybe something like this isn't for the casual fan. Anyway, this show has done the rounds for years and if you've never managed to pick it up before, now's your chance. You might be just as happy with some











of the many shows that can be tracked down if you choose to seek them out online… (AM)
(bootleg)

I FARM – "So My Kids Won't Have To" CD

This is a reissue of their Creep Records debut. No new tunes, but some new artwork. 18 short, sharp tracks of staccato, rapid-fire hardcore, much in the vein of the FREEZE, with the odd, melodic SCREECHING WEASEL flourish thrown in to keep it from getting monotonous. The enthusiasm shines through. I can dig it. (RK)
(Blackout!, www.blackoutrecords.com)

INSTANT AGONY – "One Man Army" EP

INSTANT AGONY from the UK has a punk-as-fuck EP out now on Puke n' Vomit Records! Judging by the photo on the back of the sleeve, these punks have been kicking around the punk scene for a while. The *One Man Army* EP has solid vocals with good guitars chugging along behind and a rhythm section that anchors the whole melodic punk sound. Put your GBH and INFA-RIOT records aside for a couple of days and listen to INSTANT AGONY. Very good! (BR)
(Puke n' Vomit, pukenvomitrecords.com)

JOHNNY THURSDAY & THE FRIDAY NIGHTS – "...Ruin it for Everyone" CD

Snotty rock 'n' roll with as much of an AC/DC influence as a punk one. This is the kind of music favored by people who hang around in bars, drink PBR, and lie about themselves. (AD)
(Hangmen, PO Box 263, Sussex, NJ 07461)

JUKEBOX ZEROS – "Four on the Floor" CD

Faux-junkie punk that you've already heard on your HEARTBREAKERS and DEAD BOYS platters, and they don't come remotely close to capturing the spirit or oomph of either. This could be the kinda thing one might witness live and think better of, but there's nothing on this disc you haven't already heard many times before. (MC)
(Steel Cage, PO Box 29247, Philadelphia, PA 19125)

LIVE FAST DIE – "Guitar Star" EP

This single is a new example of what singles should be like in 2006: raw, snarly, song-oriented, and with some kind of fucking *take* in the production department. In this case, LIVE FAST DIE go for the ol' "dropping wailing guitar into the middle of a song from a great height," and it makes this one of the best 45s I heard all of last year. I'm a total sucker for blatantly inserted guitar overdubs, especially if they are absolutely shameless about it and they are also as fucked up as these are. If folks want 45s to keep retaining their usefulness, than this should function as a nifty template for all the new bands lurching about. This label is also now officially anointed a "winner." (RW)
(Your Permanent)

LRF – "Firm as a Rock" CDEP

And indeed it is. Cockney-worshipping herberts from the land of the rising sun, guessing by the crazy names. Even a mention of the mighty underdogs and East End heroes West Ham United, showing how desperate these cats are for the sweet sound of the Bow bells. This is way too good to be oi—rocking, full, loud, and melodic, mixing up the riffs of AC/DC with the anthemic chants of COCK SPARRER. A blueprint for all the other baldies who are desperately getting it wrong. Along with fellow countrymen the SOLUTIONS, LRF hold the torch on how this style should be done. (SD)
(Moneytalks)

THE MACHINES WILL TAKE OVER – "I Thought About a Romantic Meal for Two / Talking to Mirrors"

Emo punk circa 1992 *a la* early JAWBREAKER or J CHURCH without the popness vocally. There is some decent guitar play with screaming vocals *a la* ANTI-FLAG from this UK combo, making a good 7". (RL)
(www.asaresult.co.uk)

MAD MARGE & THE STONECUTTERS – "Monsters" CD

Super slick psychobilly with powerful female vocals. The STONECUTTERS deliver lots of good energy and musicianship while MAD MARGE croons a solid, sultry melody. She seems a bit restrained. I'd like to hear her wail or belt it out more often. Altogether, this is an excellent debut with outstanding bass licks. (HM)
(Baseline Music Co., www.baselinemusic.net)

MAKEOUTMUSIC – "Segrenation" CD

Starts off very Fat Wreck Chords circa 1994, and from there goes…well, nowhere really. Are these guys from New Zealand or somewhere? Let me check the website—be right back…no, New York or Jersey. The second track loses the NOFX thing but it's back with track three. (AD)
(www.makeoutmusic.net)

MEAN SEASON – "The Memory..." CD

Thanks to Indecision Records, this disc brings us tracks from the *Guilty by Association, It's for Life,* and *Bringing It Back* comps, their *Grace* LP, and *Bleed* 7", and a handful of unreleased tracks. I don't remember ever hearing of MEAN SEASON, but listening to these 19 tracks of second rate, mid-paced 90s sXe hardcore makes it tough to say I really missed out… How did that UNBROKEN song go…something…something…regret? (VH)
(Indecision, PO Box 5052, Garden Grove, CA 92846)

MEAT DEPRESSED – "Fat, Drunk, and Stoopid" CD

This band is definitely all about winding up the lefties or the PC types by the deliberately over-the-top obnoxious imagery and lyrics and by writing "Support Our Troops" inside the cover. I don't really care…it doesn't mean they support the war I guess. Me, I'm actually for the war but against the troops. Anyway, how's the music? It's very generic, snotty, and basic punk rock *a la* the QUEERS or BORIS THE SPRINKLER. It's not bad, though it's not really good either. (AD)
(Good Cop/Bad Cop)

MAXIMUM RNR — "Horns Up" CD

A seven-minute blast of an album from Canada. It got the Bruce Roehrs seal of approval, and hell, look at the band name. It's like a less bar rock TIGHT BROS, and to quote an English advert, does what it says on the tin, "Maximum RNR." Not false advertising but not really my thing. Song number five is eight seconds long and is right up my street, like an '81 basement hardcore band. The rest, however, is a little too rock for me. (LG)
(Box P62-275, King St. East, Toronto M5A 1K2, CANADA)

THE MIRACLE – "True Spirit" EP

Modern youth crew hardcore outta Italy. The high production values and metal touches aren't really my thing, but I was into the fact that lyrically the MIRACLE went beyond the yawn-inducing straight edge clichés about their former best friends breaking edge, and had some songs dealing with war and colonialism. Moreover, a portion of the profits from the record will be donated to Amnesty International. A bit more radical than not drinking a beer in my opinion. (CS)
(Commitment, Klein Muiden 38, 1393 RL Nigtevecht, NETHERLANDS, www.commitmentrecords.nl)

NAUSEA – "The Punk Terrorist Anthology Vol. 1" CD

Ever since I was a teenager of 13 years of age it has been my dream to review NAUSEA, my favorite crust band of the 90s without a doubt. Who ever thought that it would happen? I was fucking 13 at the time. Well it's finally happened, but unfortunately other versions of this CD (and LP) have been reviewed in this zine in the recent past. Being the undying NAUSEA freak I am, I really think that this could have been done much better. I mean, they have a huge wealth of artwork, pictures, interviews, and now the backing from Alternative Tentacles to really go all out and make a big deal out of it. Maybe a 24-page booklet, or a digipak case, or even some liner notes from the founding members (more than just one). I do appreciate the addition of lyrics in this newer edition, tiny as they may be. I have to say I would have rather seen this come out as a full discography history with all the songs in order. Everyone knows NAUSEA, they are a fucking staple name; I don't need to review their music, though I do think that the re-mastered songs sound a bit duller than the original releases. I don't know, I think that a ton of kids will buy this—that is a given—so why skimp on the packaging? Oh yeah, I hate the new cover as well. It looks like something some kid in Hot Topic would buy. NAUSEA fucking rules, though, so if you can't find any of their original releases you should buy this—you won't be disappointed by their music. (WK)
(Alternative Tentacles, alternativetentacles.com)

NK6 / DUDMAN – split EP

These two Japanese bands just pummeled through town and wrecked the fuck out of the Bay. NK6!!!!! I love 'em! It is hectic and crazy Japanese hardcore, total GAUZE worship and I am totally in favor of that. I got a black eye while stage diving at their show—fuck, I love this band! DUDMAN's side of the record held my attention, while live they lost me a bit; this record is noisy and fast-as-fuck but still held up. Overall, this is a great record. (MS)
(625, www.625thrash.com)

NO DICE – "Suffer" EP

Four savage tunes to tear your head off, pull your spine out from your body, and charge around the room to. "Asshole" is the standout crushing hardcore stomper, a relentless song landing in intensity somewhere very close to INFEST, with lyrics challenging sexism and domestic abuse; this song is so fucking good! A great EP of NO DICE demo tracks. Check this out. (BS)
(625, www.625thrash.com)

ONE REASON – "The End Never Mattered" EP

I remember liking a CD by these folks a couple years back. This EP has a more vocal friendly mix than before. The A-side starts out with an anthem, which is just fine by me—a little pop punk, a little emo jamming. The flipside borders on indie. This is a band I'll still keep an eye on. (RL)
($4 ppd: Salinas, PO Box 20996, Ferndale, MI 48220, www.unshadowed.com/salinas)

OPPOSITION PARTY – "Zombified" CD

This band is so disorientingly bad in so many ways it makes my head spin. First the cover art looks like a death metal record, but musically they're anything but. Well, the production's heavy and the drummer's probably got two kick drums, but the music is bad metalized punk riffs, like when DISCHARGE went metal, with cockney vocals channeling CHAOS UK and the EXPLOITED…which is kinda weird as they're from Singapore. They've also somehow been around for almost twenty years and have still not figured out what a bad idea slap bass is. This thing is a fucking mess. (EL)
(Pulverised, www.pulverised.net)

OUT COLD – "Looking Through Communist Eyes" DVD

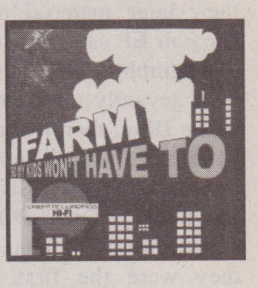
In summer of 2004, veteran Massachusetts HC band OUT COLD traveled to Russia, and this DVD captures their first ever gig in that country, at the St. Petersburg club Moloko. Picture this: a no-nonsense hardcore band from the US travels halfway around the world to play an incendiary set for an excited crowd of young Russian punks. While not every note is captured with clarity on the DIY recording, the energy of the show totally comes through. Actually, the sound quality is not so bad, and will be forgiven by the OUT COLD fans 'cause you can generally hear well enough to know what's going on and what song they're playing. The crowd won't let OUT COLD stop till they've played two encores ("Do you want to hear a fast one or a slow one?" Naturally, the crowd picks a fast one), and the band can't help but grin and enjoy their warm reception. There are eighteen songs which span the long length of OUT COLD's career, and while this probably isn't the best place to start with this band I give it an unqualified recommendation because it is such a worthy document of what must've been a great show. (GN)
(Acme, PO Box 441, Dracut, MA 01826, www.acmerecords.net)

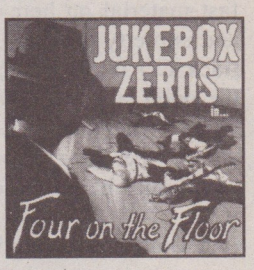
OUTRAGED / POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT – split EP

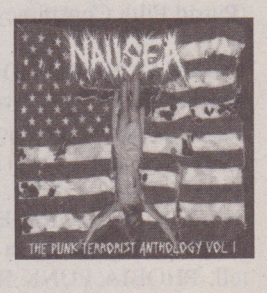
Both of these bands play manic hardcore/thrash with strained, screamed vocals. OUTRAGED is more traditional in their approach, not unlike LIMP WRIST, while POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT brings a little more of a spastic vibe, which reminded me a little of DEEP WOUND with breakdowns. Even with the bad name, POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT delivers my favorite side of this split. But it was close… (CC)
(Unholy Thrash, c/o Jose Ramirez, PO Box 675, Santa Cruz, CA 95061)

OUTSPOKEN – "Spotlight" CD

It's good to see yet another great California hardcore reissue by the guys down at Indecision







Records. Hailing from Orange County, OUTSPOKEN had a signature early-90s hardcore sound not unlike VERBAL ASSAULT or other post-hardcore bands from that era. Most songs have a plodding, mid-pace tempo that I am not sure would go over well today with most straight edge kids; the ten minute long epic "Prisoner" being a prime example of overindulgent riffage. I myself am a big fan, especially of their later material recorded during the *Current* EP sessions (featured first on this discography). If you were never a fan of their severely under-produced LP *A Light in the Dark*, then I would re-visit it here. It is remixed and re-mastered, and sounds like a completely different recording (for the better). OUTSPOKEN's lyrics were sometimes political and always intelligent; they were the first band I ever heard address homophobia in a song. The only fast material on here is from their demo, and is pretty good for 1990. Sure, this 28-track CD is a little long and uneven, but the good stuff on here is great and worth having. Endnote: the sampling of whales before the song about the environment could only be pulled off in the early 90s. (CC)
(www.indecisionrecords.com)

PISSCHRIST – "Forged in the Flames" EP

Here we have some really driving, raw hardcore punk that will make any crust fan's list; this as a must-own record. PISSCHRIST seems to have a multi-country lineup going, but not to worry—they play perfectly tight songs that are actually quite refreshingly straightforward and punk. Good vocals, good music, nice artwork, an all around good record. Better than most of the crap coming out now. (WK)
(Putrid Filth Conspiracy, putridfilth.com)

PHOBIA PUNK ROCKERS – "Antes Morrer de Pe Que Viver de Joelnos" CD

An anthemic 14-track collection full of sing-along parts and catchy, swaggering tunes in the vein of early CLASH and STIFF LITTLE FINGERS. I guess it'd be called street punk these days. As far as I can tell, PHOBIA PUNK ROCKERS are from Brazil. Certainly, all the lyrics and liner stuff is in Portuguese, and seem to deal a lot with revolution and revolt. Anarchy signs and anti-fascist emblems abound, and the CD booklet opens with a lengthy quote from Carlos Marighella, the legendary theorist of urban guerilla warfare. You get the drift… (RK)
(www.rebelmusic.com.br/phobia)

PLASMID – "Lust for Power" EP

PLASMID, whose four-song demo was, until now, featured most prominently on die-hard tape trader lists, and whose logo appeared almost exclusively on Japanese raw punx' hand-made jacket designs, finally gets the vinyl treatment here, courtesy of UK label Shortfuse. This EP features the four original demo tracks (one a different version) and a previously unreleased fifth track(!!) of extremely raw, noisy, exciting, and unrelenting UK hardcore punk. In his review of the demo in *MRR* #16, Pushead calls PLASMID, "a sonic crossfire of furious mayhem...perhaps the fastest disorder to come out of the UK yet," and who am I to disagree with Pus? This is primal noize-not-music that will likely continue to find its niche in the cult sub-sect of hardcore punk fans who worship all things DISORDER-influenced and drenched in feedback and static. But what a beautiful racket this is, and finally readily available with the best possible sound quality (it is 20-plus-year-old boom box recordings, after all) instead of on some shite 10th generation cassette tape. I am fucking pumped for the bonus track "Lust For Power II" with its crazy guitar leads and almost hypnotizing main riff. And, as a historical look at a very obscure band in a particular moment in time, this reissue definitely delivers. First of all, the sleeve is printed on like, future paper or something—the ink practically jumps off the page. There are, count 'em, *three* inserts with the record, including liners by one of the band members, the above quoted *MRR* review (and art), the original art from the tape (I assume), lyrics, lots of incredible photos (for a band that never played live, PLASMID sure put a lot of work into their two huge hand-done banners, presumably hung in their bedroom practice space). There is context provided for the PLASMID sound ("Our main influences were fast UK bands such as DISCHARGE, ANTI-SECT, ANTI-SYSTEM, etc., but we wanted to be faster!") and a lot to look at for the fanatics who are clearly the intended audience for this release. The record also comes with a badge featuring the PLASMID logo, which is a nice touch. Clearly, this was a labor of love for the label. Well done! (GN)
(Shortfuse)

PREY / X-WING – split EP

I put the PREY side on first because they seamed more interesting than another band named after some goofy *Star Wars* crap. PREY had me scouring the insert to see where they're from; if they aren't from Canada, they love the mid-90s Canadian 'core. I can hear elements of LEFT FOR DEAD in there. I say that mostly because they have the same driving sound that LEFT FOR DEAD coined, though they also have some dark heavy parts to even things out; the vocals are gruff and yelled and there are the occasional group back ups. X-WING does nothing for me; they play heartfelt hardcore with some poppy riffs that remind me of a bastardized version of Q-FACTOR. (NE)
(Spacement, 351 E. Taylor, Reno, NV 89502)

PROZACS – "Live at CBGBs" CD

Third rate WEASEL-core that bores the shit out of me—I wish CBGBs had closed, just so I wouldn't have had to hear this release. If you like predictable, boring, and lifeless music than you might like this one. (JF)
(Cheapskate, 297 Stoodley Pl., Schenctady, NY 12303)

PURGATIVE KLYSTER / VOL 4 – split EP

PURGATIVE KLYSTER is a bass/drum duo from Sweden busting out eight tracks of short, fast, and mostly forgettable power violence/grind. I know this is wicked old-school and occasionally there are some catchy breakdown bits but most of this failed to register much with me. TECHNICAL ECSTASY, er, I mean VOL 4, is a typically unlistenable power electronics duo from Sacramento. Lots of droning, blown-out noise and feedback for you if that's your thing. *Not* one of my favorite 7"s ever. (EL)
(Agromosh, ben_agromosh@yahoo.com)

RADIO BIKINI / XAMORX – split EP

Netherlands' RADIO BIKINI pounds out four tracks of hectic, intense, and politically charged hardcore with the harsh vocal style I love. XAMORX, a self proclaimed "political straight edge power violence" band from Porto Alegre, Brazil, doesn't disappoint with their unrelenting steamroller assault. Don't let the sXe bit scare you off, they play ultra-fast, solid hardcore that steers clear of the youth crew clichés. The record comes with a lyric book that includes Spanish and English translations and brief song explanations. Neither band blew me away, but they definitely don't deserve to be overlooked. A surprisingly above average split release. (VH)
(UPS, c/o Mos, Vliegtuiglaan 3, 3769 JM Soesterberg, HOLLAND)

RAJOITUS – "Hat Mörker Amfetamin" EP

It's been some time since these crazy Finnish hardcore-loving bastards have put out any new material. I sometimes wonder if the highly copied sound is really relevant, but it is really fun to get obliterated to as well as play. RAJOITUS do this style with finesse and there experience shows with no loss of direction. Thick guitars, crazy drumming, and harsh war cries. This will no doubt be in every distro soon and is worth checking out. (WK)
(Hardcore Holocaust, www.hardcoreholocaust.com)

RANDY – "Randy the Band" CD

I don't know why these guys aren't huge here. I miss the NEWTOWN NEUROTICS but we have the comparable Swedish combo RANDY to fill their shoes. Great, sarcastic social political songs where every hit seems to sound different from the last. Not as frantic as their last full-length but a bit catchier. These guys are legends in my book, and goddammit, go see them when they come to your town! (RL)
(Fat Wreck, www.randytheband.com)

RCADE INFERNO – "This Gent's a Scoundrel" CD

I believe RCADE INFERNO is the same as the defunct ARCADE INFERNO, not to be confused with the ARCADE FIRE. This dynamic duo features whiney vocals over punky-emo-indie stuff. They do have drums, bass, and guitar most of the time, but they include two slow songs with vocals accompanied by acoustic instruments. One song has a guitar while the other features a guitar and a violin-ish instrument. This adds depth to the release, but I could do without both tunes. At best they sorta remind me of HICKEY, but there's some absolutely horrible stuff here too. The vocals have totally worn me down halfway through the thirteen tracks. Ouch. (HM)
(ADD, PO Box 8240, Tampa, FL 33674, www.arcadeinferno.com)

REMAIN – "As Sharp as Knives" EP

Tough straight edge out of Holland complete with tattoo flash artwork, pick slides, and songs about being "thicker than blood." It's easy to make fun, but this record is really good—it reminded me of FLOORPUNCH in that almost-tough-guy-but-not-quite way. (TB)
(www.njwords.com)

ROCK 'N' ROLL STORMTROOPERS – "On Fire" CD

This German rock-ish punk band has lots of background vocals here to sing along to. A little DIE TOTEN HOSEN, a little ANDREW WK, and a little DEAD BOYS. Decent, fun stuff for the kegger crowd. (RL)
(Full Breach Kicks, www.fullbreach77.com)

ROCKS – "You'r So Boring" EP

Fuck man, the Aussies could do no wrong! *Really*. If you've got any doubt, this six-song reissue of ROCKS' 1978 scorcher might be the one to win you over. The anthemic title track "Your So Boring" is sure to induce any punk into a fist waving frenzy that'll result in a turntable soaked with spilled beer by the end of the first side. Small Axe Records delivers this dead-on reproduction (aside from playing at 33 rpm) of the original Point Break pressing of 500. If you weren't around for that one, you might recognize a few of these tracks from the *Where Birdmen Flew, Back to Front,* and *Feel Lucky Punk?!* comps. Ranking up there with the VICTIMS, X, RAZAR, and the NEWS, this is classic *Murder Punk*—ultra-raw and undeniably catchy. Great! (VH)
(Small Axe, PO Box A2155, Sydney South 2000, NSW, AUSTRALIA)

RUM RUNNER – "Dead Men Are Heavier than Broken Hearts / Body of an American"

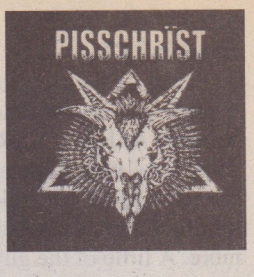
I usually hate this brand of Celtic style punk rock, but fortunately for my listening pleasure RUM RUNNER has that something special that elevates them above all the other FLOGGING MOLLYs and DROPKICK MURPHYS of the world. Maybe it's the rough and tumble feel of honesty and not forcing it, or the fact that they can write a damn good tune. It's the closest thing to the POGUES that I've heard that hasn't made me cringe. Even their cover of the aforementioned shines all the way through. Finally, a bunch of Paddied-up punks I can raise a glass to. (SD)
(Longshot, PMB#72, 302 Bedford Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11211, www.longshotmusic.com)

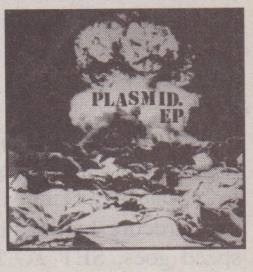
RUNAMUCK / TERRORISM – split EP

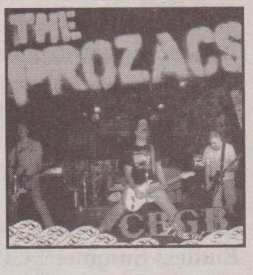
Pretty killer split from these two Californian grinders. RUNAMUCK, a bass-less trio from the Central Valley (Fresno, I think) tears it up with seven tracks of frenetic grind with some particularly brutal blast beats. The only thing is the production's pretty dismal—really thin and not so heavy on the guitars, which is a shame cuz the riffs are good. LA's TERRORISM by comparison sounds great with a nice, full, heavy sound. Their take on the standard CARCASS fare is nothing new, but the rippin' tunes make up for the lack of originality, plus they have one of the most bizarre and ridiculous whispered/strangled/gargled vocal approaches ever. Good stuff for sure. (EL)
(Morbid Reality / Beat the Meat)

RYDELLS – "Go Mental" CD

As a band I have to give the RYDELLS credit. With them there is finally a band that has captured the fire and passion as well as the life of the RAMONES. It seems to me the band had to have been channeling the deceased RAMONES from the grave to get a CD that sounded like this. There's one problem, though, boys, you captured the RAMONES on their last record, not their first. And that last RAMONES record wasn't very good. (JF)
(Cheapskate, 297 Stoodley Pl., Schenctady, NY 12303, www.cheapskaterecords.com)







SECULAR END – "Revenge of the Phoenix" CD

Punky indie stuff here with loose production and lots of emotion. Somewhere in between ASH and VERSUS in a weird way. This is a very secular release. This guy sounds like he had religion rammed down his throat and he's not gonna take it anymore. A little of the guy and gal vocal thing here which gives this a PIXIES touch too. (RL)
(Cellar Door, www.secularend.com)

SET TO EXPLODE – "Feel the Rage" EP

This is one fucking rockin' hardcore record! I am not sure where the band is from, but they bring some nice and powerful hardcore to the punk table. As far as speed goes, SET TO EXPLODE provides us with a couple of hardcore rippers as well as some mid-paced stuff with melody like on the standout "Never Give In." This is good shit. (MS)
(Grave Mistake, PO Box 12482 Richmond, VA 23241)

SHOP FRONTS – "So Sick" EP

Holy shit, I love poppy, garage punk with female vocals. This is fucking awesome. It's like a crazy mix between O LEVEL, the FLATMATES, and the GYMSLIPS. To top it all off, there's a subliminal message on the back of the pic-sleeve, "Horizontal Action." Seriously, this is well played punk rock that's got a poppy edge without being overly polished. Excellent. (KK)
(Noma Beach, PO Box 735, Sonoma, CA, 95476, www.theshopfronts.com)

SICK ELECTRIC – "Nuclear Winter, Endless Summer" CD

Melodic and noisy rock with abrasive, abridged riffs that focus on the small details of chord progressions; often repeating through dynamic changes that expose subtle hooks and nuances with good results. A comparable, though considerably lighter, sound to UNWOUND, BLONDE REDHEAD, CARS GET CRUSHED, with their own (in this case) digital footprint in the valley of all that is influenced by SONIC YOUTH. (BS)
(www.sickelectric.com)

SICK TERROR / MIGRA VIOLENTA – split EP

Damn, quite an impressive outpouring of anger and energy from this South American pair. SICK TERROR from Brazil is my easy favorite—these guys get better and more pissed with every record. They have a perfect balance of fast hardcore and even faster blasting/growling grindcore with scathing, assaulting vocals and compelling, original song structures. These guys are quickly becoming a powerful force in the grind/hardcore scene, one whose releases I always look forward to hearing. MIGRA VIOLENTA from Argentina sound a bit tame in comparison, but are still plenty fast and energetic in their own right, bringing to mind the speedy thrash of SEEIN RED and the like. They even have a touch of emo about them on the semi-melodic first track, especially when coupled with the title, "Why Don't Speak About Love." This is definitely quality stuff from both bands. (EL)
(Terrotten, www.terrotten.com)

THE SILVER SHINE – "Sunset" EP

The SILVER SHINE throws a little rockabilly into their punk rock. This six-song EP highlights their slap bass, which is quickly overshadowed by guitar effects and "whoa whoas." These old-school straight edgers probably could mix their next release a bit more rockabilly to stand out a bit more, but this is a pretty good debut. (HM)
(Commitment, Klein Muiden 38, 1393 RL Nigtevecht, NETHERLANDS, www.commitmentrecords.com)

SIN REMEDIO / LIFE IN EXILE – split EP

SIN REMEDIO—who I believe is from Southern California—plays a mix of grind and crust. Super lo-fi tunes—it says it was recorded in their living room—with female vocals. On the flip is LIFE IN EXILE with their raw and awkward mix of screamo and black metal on the first track. They add in some straight-up crust riffs on the second track. The vocals here are a little too much (especially on the first track), alternating between a high-pitched screech and a hilarious gruff growl. LIFE IN EXILE's stuff was relatively lo-fi as well and in the end neither band really did much for me. (RC)
(Morbid Reality, geocities.com/terrorgrind)

SKEPTIX – "Live at CBGBs" DVD

Wowee, I got a SKEPTIX DVD to review. Thanks, Santa! So I'll turn off the granny-porn and watch these other old fuckers on my TV. I can't say I was ever the biggest SKEPTIX fan, as I always considered them a very B-list early UK82 band. I was on the bus one day a few years ago and some school kids got on and one of them had *two* (count 'em!) SKEPTIX patches on his jacket! In this day and age! I don't know what's wrong with young people these days. Anyway, apparently he's not alone and enough other people like the band to warrant them coming to the United States and playing at CBGBs. This is somewhat of a documentary of their tour here and the wacky high jinx that happened along the way. The video quality is pretty good and the sound not far behind. I suppose hardcore fans of the band will really dig it…but there's no fuckin' way I'm watching the whole thing. (AD)
(Puke n Vomit, PO Box 3435, Fullerton, CA 02834)

SKULLS AND FLAMES – "Dead Area Paranoia" LP

Uh, I can honestly say that I am not really a fan of this release. Starting with the cheesy artwork and bad band logo on the cover, things get progressively worse. They rip off the Pusmort logo and lettering and most of their songs reference some 80s-style band. Musically, they are basic metallic thrash with forced vocals that sound like the singer from DRI. I imagine that they worship bands like DRI and SUICIDAL TENDENCIES though unfortunately they come nowhere close to the quality of those two bands. (RC)
(Fast & Furious, www.fast-furious.nl)

SLIGHT / PERALTA – split CD

Two Italian bands dish out seven songs apiece. SLIGHT plays heavy, mid-paced, early-90s style emo hardcore. They bounce back and forth between a melodic Ebullition sound and a discordant BLOOD BROTHERS sassy-ness, reminding me of QUICKSAND. It's melodic and the vocals are completely whiney and obnoxious. Combining three styles I couldn't care less about, they do as good a job of it as anyone…but it's about as exciting as falling asleep on the bus in a puddle of urine. As they speed things up a bit with their mediocre stab at radio friendly pop-punk, PERALTA's half of the CD at least has a pulse to it…but not much of one. (VH)
(Rolling Anarchy, Enrico Zazzeron, via Strada Alta n.18, 36050 Bressanvido, ITALY)

SLITS – "BBC Recordings 1977-81" LP

Widely recognized as their finest hour, the SLITS' Peel Sessions are bootlegged here and I am assuming you are getting ready to sell all your shitty records and get a hold of this immediately. The cover is so horrible—a bad seaside artist's rendition of the SLITS in St. Trinian's-style schoolgirl uniforms—but don't let that put you off because this is as classic as it gets. Captures the total exuberance of a band on

fuckin' fire. I mean, apart from the song "#1 Enemy" from the demo, I don't think anything else they recorded hits the mark like this does. Palmolive's drumming is as individual and creative as Moe Tucker's, Ari is like a teenager laughing as the world burns. The way their voices collide and the trash of the guitar make me wanna climb buildings and shoplift and escape. This is what punk is; it's not a set cartoon sound, it's creativity and fire and fun and sharp critiques of the straight life. This record makes me happy that I am a punk, makes me never wanna grow up and lose this world we created. Destroy it! Enjoy it! Features all the Peel Sessions, plus the later more dubby stuff they did without Palmolive and with Neneh Cherry. (LG)
(Slitsofrantic, no address)

SMACKS – "Here Lieth the Smacks, Protected by the Ejaculation of Serpents" CD

A two-headed beast bred in the goat-infested hollows of Kentucky, the SMACKS write and play tunes primarily for their own amusement. Sometimes the casual listener wins, sometimes he/she is frozen out of the equation while tortured guitar, drums and vocals chase each other through the treetops like malnourished carrion birds. *Squawk. Protected by the Ejaculation of Serpents* is dedicated to deceased chicken-choker Hasil Adkins, whose influence is apparent: it's quirky, loping squee with a country blues influence in spots, mean guitar, and a complete distain for accessibility. Grunts, grinds, groans and moans (more than you really wanted, actually). Knee-jerk assessment: 33% is fun, bare-boned rock 'n' roll, 67% is self-indulgent rubbish. (JH)
(Dogwhistle)

SNEAKY PINKS – EP

Very dopey and very great offshoot of the garage rock OKMONIKS. It's recorded at Radio Shack Studios for the sub-basement fidelity that made household names out of SUPERCHARGER, but it's obvious from the get-go that immortality is *not* the object of this EP. This is strictly for-the-moment, sloppy, playing-on-carpet-samples punk rock for the now now now, transmitting punk germs alloverthe-plac. Priceless. Well, more like $4 ppd from... (RW)
(Rubber Vomit, PO Box 3593, Tucson, AZ 85722)

SUICIDE BID – "This is the Generation" CD

If you liked the reggae punk mix of the CLASH you'll dig this. Featuring ex-members of EX-CATHEDRA , P.A.I.N. and KING PRAWN, to name a few, this Brit combo dishes out some dirty reggae punk with political lyrics and distorted production. Great punk vocals with thick accents that would have fit right in back in 1980. (RL)
(Household Name, householdnamerecords.co.uk)

SVARTENBRANDT – "Sista Dan' I Ramplijuset" EP

This reminds me of a lot of goodtime hardcore thrash from the Bay Area. SVARTENBRANDT plays fast and raw, has moments of greatness, funny and/or witty lyrics, and are at some points unmemorable to me. I think that this style is fun live, but the songs just don't catch my attention or stay in my memory. That is not to say that fans of 625, I OBJECT, or a slew of other hardcore thrash bands like DS-13 wouldn't dig this. Nice DIY effort on the record, but ultimately not my thing. (WK)

STEVE TREATMENT & THE NOMEN – "Vanish" EP

Quick history lesson: the UK's Steve Treatment put out a batch of EPs in '78/'79, the SWELL MAPS backing him up on the first one, and all three do not have a single duff track, being fantastic spidery DIY punk with his Marc Bolan-derived vocals flitting across the top. Here is his first new vinyl in 26 years, and while his vocals are not quite as dead-on Bolan-esque any more, he can still write a meanly strummed psych-punk ditty. It comes off as mid-period Flying Nun now (like 1987-ish, say), which is high praise indeed. Considering how much I love the old EPs, the basic soul evident on this EP comes as a vast relief…he's still got it! (RW)
(Topplers, www.topplers.net)

STITCH HOPELESS & THE SEA LEGS – "Stuffing Coffins" CD

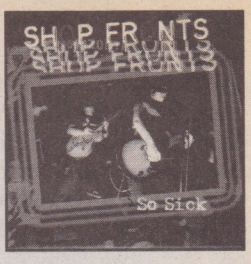
God-awful psychobilly, helped along in its pathetic-ness by some of the saddest tough guy vocals I've possibly ever heard. As spooky as a carnival ghost train and as frightening as one those very unfrightening Chucky movies. Oh. I'm soooooooo scared. (SD)
(Hairball 8, www.hairball8.com)

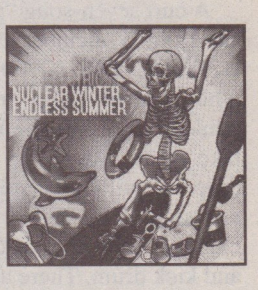
THOUGHT CRIMINALS – "Chrono-Logical" 2xLP

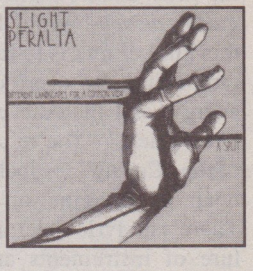
A fantastic collection of all the THOUGHT CRIMINALS recordings released during their brief existence between 1977-1980, plus a few more. The THOUGHT CRIMINALS were one of the classic Australian punk bands, and were among the true original independents who released their own records and broke up when things weren't fun anymore. You probably know and love them for such great songs as "I Won't Pay (for Punk Records)" and "More Suicides Please." If you do, you know you want the other 25 songs too. This collection comes on double clear vinyl with a booklet featuring a bunch of pictures and song lyrics. It looks really cool and sounds even better. (CK)
(Ascension, www.ascensionrecords.com.au)

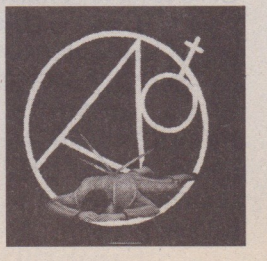
TOREROS AFTER OLÉ – "Porom Pom Pero" 2xEP

Legit vinyl reissue of this incredible seven-song 12" from 1983. The music is up-tempo punk rock, and while there is definitely a sense of melody, the focus here is on speed—charging drums, manic guitar, pulsing bass, and a breathless vocalist spitting out the lyrics as if his fucking life depended on it. The pace only lets up for "Corruptor de Menores," a four-minute dirge on the second disc. I will admit to not









being as familiar with old Spanish punk as some folks, but I'd imagine TOREROS AFTER OLÉ was more towards the hardcore end of the spectrum than most bands from that country at the time. This probably blew some minds when it first came out. As intense and urgent as it gets. (CS)
(Munster, www.munster-records.com)

TRUST IN FEW – "Shitlist" CD

A curt seven-song "punk rock" side project from a member of Boston's DEATH BEFORE DISHONOR. Lots of whoa-whoa's over solid mid-tempo hardcore punk, kind of like the Warped Tour modern take on an '80s sound where metallic licks drop in, with precision Epi-Fat recording and sing-along delivery. It's mixed with a club mix style drum sound with a loud snare and kick drum. There are cool bass and guitar parts, but they're completely buried in the mix. Classic punk was, is, and remains *guitar. driven*. While I think the intent of this kind of mix is to make the music sound rampaging, the overtness buries the speed, energy, and melodic elements. Songs like "You Suck," "You're a Piece of Shit," and "Stop Crying" probably don't require a heap of imagination to piece together. There's no lyric sheet; instead you get a picture of instruments and recording equipment. (KS)
(Spook City, PO Box 34891 Philadelphia, PA 19101)

TURN THE SCREW – "Paths" EP

These Belgian youngsters bring the rage with nine songs of great, fast hardcore. Its no surprise that these up-and-comers sound a hell of a lot like JUSTICE—especially with the vocalist's growls and grunts—but TURN THE SCREW definitely has their own flavor. I could have done without the mosh intro on side B, but the rest of the record was on fire. (CC)
(Not Just Words, De Kling 4–8651 CKIJLST, NETHERLANDS, njwrecords.com)

URGENCIES – "Desolation Chic" CD

Sounds like *We Have Come for Your Children*-era DEAD BOYS with the addition of organ and harmonica…or POISON, actually. Production straddles "slick" and "rough" effectively. Nice guitar sound. Good cover of "Million Miles Away." Don't want to damn the URGENCIES with faint praise 'cause they're good at what they do—they're just similar to so many other DEAD BOYS/NY DOLLS/HEARTBREAKERS-influenced bands that the impact is dulled. (JH)
(Bubble Empire, www.bubbleempire recordings.com)

URCHIN / ANTI-JUSTICE – split EP

Yoichi, you are not allowed to ever stop Snuffy Smile. Every release you put out is quality and this split is no exception. The URCHIN proves once again that they are one of the finest melodic punk bands out there. Awesome stuff with an almost indie feel. ANTI-JUSTICE, meanwhile, plays cheerful punk with a great East Bay influence. (JF)
(Snuffy Smile, 4-1-16-201 Daita, Setagaya-ku, Tokyo 55-0033, JAPAN, snuffysmile@capella.freemail.ne.jp)

WASTED TIME – "Shameless" EP

This is another cool release on Grave Mistake Records; this EP is a split release with Brain Grenade Records. WASTED TIME gives us eight tracks of guitar fueled hardcore with speed and intensity. Cool guitar work here with some heavy bass shit thrown in to make it a pretty nice release. The vocalist has a nice growl going. I'm into it. (MS)
(Grave Mistake, PO Box 12482, Richmond, VA 23241)

WE MARCH – "The Madness Ends Here" CD

Bolt from the blue time, a great gutbucket punk CD (unfortunately trapped in the Valley of Digital Hell, far, far from vinyl sainthood, but I digress) by some kids who have ducked more than a few radars, I would guess. These fuckers have a great guitar buzz going on this, *waaaay* the fuck forward in the mix, and while some would call their sound a teensy bit *Killed by Death*, I think non-thrash California 1982 is closer to the mark. Even the lyrics are good on this, so jeez, to quote a great flicker, "Who are these guys?" If they put out an EP just sit back and watch the fur fly. I think these guys would really rip on a three-song platter. (RW)
($7 ppd: Non-Prophet, www.wemarch.net)

WOJCZECH – "Sedimente" CD

Wow, this German band got a whole lot better all of a sudden. I didn't pay much attention to their earlier, let's say, sloppier material, but they've kicked it into high gear for this new record, helped by a super-heavy, super-clear recording. The blast beats are really clean and fast, which of course makes me happy, but it's really the guitars that stand out. Some of the only successfully melodic grind I've heard—think of the closing track "Sometimes Dead is Better" from NASUM's *Human 2.01* mixed with HIS HERO IS GONE-style minor-key melody and you get an idea. The only negative here is that the record's a bit stacked up front—seems like they put the best songs first and some of the later tracks lack their permanence. This is still quite great and totally worth it for the first few tracks alone. (EL)
(Selfmadegod, POB 46, 21500 Biala Podl., POLAND, www.selfmadegod.com)

WOUND UP – "How to Make Friends and Influence People" EP

WOUND UP plays burly mid-tempo hardcore with some seriously over-the-top Choke-esque growling vocals. Recorded two years ago, this EP fits in neatly with the simple, no frills, early-80s-influenced hardcore sound of recent bands like PUNCH IN THE FACE or VIOLENT MINDS. On the inside sleeve, there is an extensive thanks list but no lyrics, so I can't tell you what they're singing about on songs like "You're All Wrong." Maybe you can guess… (CS)
(Painkiller, 8 Burney St. #1, Boston, MA 02120, www.painkillerrecords.com)

ZERO BOYS – "Vicious Circle" LP

This is a pretty timely reissue considering how in-vogue this sort of American proto-hardcore sound is these days—the current punk scenes in Canada, Denmark, and Sweden all owe quite a debt of gratitude to this record, with its snot-laced vocals and punk punk punk attitude. Of course, when this record came out there was no blueprint yet, and as a result the unpretentious spark of doing something new still totally oozes off the vinyl in 2006. This is the perfect soundtrack for being young and not giving a fuck, for ditching school, hanging out, having fun, being punk. Really, this is one of the most essential American punk records of the 80s 'cause for all of its attitude *Vicious Circle* also features crazy good songs and musicianship. I believe that the label that put this out is either a member of the band or a close associate, which is definitely cool in this era of semi-legit and totally sketchy "reissues." My only gripe—and honestly, it's a big one no matter how many times I've said it about however many records—is that the packaging sucks. The original art is reproduced in its entirety (including the original yellow cover), but it is weird and grainy, almost pixilated. The insert art has the lyrics and a cool photo collage, but the collage is marred by a moiré pattern, the result of poor scanning. It's real ugly. There are no liner notes, no extra art, no fliers, nothing extra at all. Also, the cardstock on the LP is super thin, meaning lots of badly dinged up copies sitting in stores and distros. Sucks because it doesn't do the music on this record any kind of justice. For the

nerds: this is a reissue of the original LP, not the late-80s Toxic Shock reissue, which means that it doesn't have the excellent bonus tracks of that version. For everyone: buy it, tape it, download it, steal it, find the original, whatever—just get this record because it fuckin' rules. (GN)
(Rifleman, PO Box 20211, Indianapolis, IN 46220, www.riflemanrecords.com)

ZERO BOYS — "Live at Cosmo's 1984" DVD

This is a complete 75-minute ZERO BOYS show shot by an audience member and allegedly unearthed last year—so don't expect anything professional along the lines of, say, Dischord's MINOR THREAT DVD. The source tape is either not first generation or there has been some sort of deterioration over the last 20 years, and the camera is quite shaky at times. That said, the sound quality is pretty damn good for this type of thing (save for ten or so minutes where the sound cuts out), and the band is in fine form. You've got all the hits here from their "hardcore" years, including "Civilization's Dying," "Vicious Circle," "Forced Entry," and a bunch of good tracks from their aborted second LP ("Black Network News," "Mom's Wallet," etc.). The packaging leaves a bit to be desired and I really could've done without the "ZERO BOYS @ Cosmo's 1984" that appears at the bottom of the screen every now and then, but overall I'm glad this historical document exists and is legitimately available. (CS)
(Rifleman, PO Box 20211, Indianapolis, IN 46220, www.riflemanrecords.com)

V/A – "As Time Goes By" EP

Japanese comp of melodic punk from Snuffy Smile, featuring BLOTTO, I EXCUSE, DRIFT AGE, and the BECAUSE. Anyone familiar with the label will know what to expect and will not be disappointed: lots of LEATHERFACE and early JAWBREAKER influence goin' on. Good. (AD)
(Snuffy Smile, 4-1-16-201 Daita, Setagaya, Tokyo 155-0033, JAPAN)

V/A – "Deutschland in Decline" EP

Most bands these days give their worst throwaway tracks to compilations for good reason—most labels do a horrible job with comps, through bad distribution, crap artwork, tons of filler bands, hack recordings, the list goes on. Heartfirst somehow managed to find seven worthy bands to give not only exclusive tracks, but downright scorchers. I really can't remember the last time I thought that a whole compilation was worth listening to. The recordings are great, the artwork is awesome down to the screened plastic sleeves, the bands all have their own style, everything is here to warrant a good review. The standout tracks for me are BURIAL with "Under the Badge," an over the top Japanese style hardcore anthem. DOOMTOWN's track "In the Jaws of Hell" is straight-ahead no-nonsense hardcore with a small TRAGEDY vibe, but not at all a replica. I know I told Christoph that I would tear him a new asshole in this review (ha ha ha) but BOMBENALARM's track, "First Class Sheep, Second Hand Dogs," is my favorite, with awesome, unnerving chants and powerful, focused rhythms that cut and soar. Every other band is well worth checking out as well, but at risk of making this a novel I will leave it at that. (WK)
(Heartfirst, www.heartfirst.net)

V/A – "Forever in Our Hearts" EP

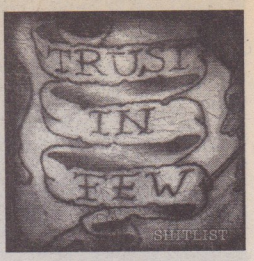
This record celebrates the 25th release of Commitment Records. Being a retrospective of sorts, this EP contains ten songs (most previously unreleased) by the following bands from the Commitment roster: CROSS ME, GUIDING LINE, FAIRFIGHT, X-MEN, VITAMIN X, NORTH, KIDS LIKE US, ONEXMORE, REACHING FORWARD, and PRODUCT X. It also contains a pretty cool (and thick) booklet with background info and anecdotes about the first 25 Commitment Records releases, as well as a lot of photos. This comp has also been made to help raise aid for Adele Collins, the editor of *I Stand Alone* fanzine, who suffers from a very serious—and expensive—spinal tumor. Pick this one up. The music is good, and it's for a great cause for a great person. (CC)
(Commitment, Klein Muiden 38, 1393 RL Nigtevecht, NETHERLANDS, www.commitmentrecords.nl)

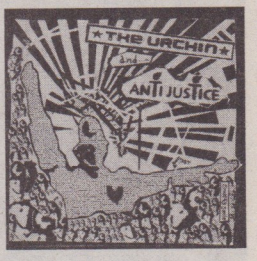
V/A – "Psychobilly Sickness" DVD

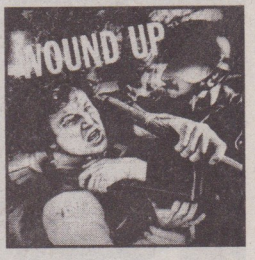
I am by no means a fan of the genre—having one METEORS record and seeing a couple of psychobilly shows does not an expert make. This DVD, however, is perfect for anyone with even a minor interest in the genre as it gives an overview of the history, bands, fashion, and global scene without ever going too deep. Some great vintage footage of the METOERS and GUANA BATZ along with plenty of footage of current bands and movers and shakers in the scene. It is clearly a labor of love, so the homemade feel of the film is forgivable. (TB)
(Hairball 8)

V/A – "Swami Tour" EP

This 7" has one song each from the HEARTACHES, SULTANS, and MARKED MEN. First off, this EP has the most minimalist of packaging—just a white inner sleeve and white labels that have been screened with the band names and song titles. In fact, if you didn't know what the bands sounded like you might have a hard time figuring out who you were listening to. I will say that the HEARTACHES song sounds like a 45 rpm tune played at 33, when in fact it is a 33. They play a rock 'n' roll style of punk that has a lil' HEARTBREAKERS or DEAD BOYS influence in it. The SULTANS sound a little bit more 60s on this release but definitely have that John Reis feel. It is the MARKED MEN who steal the show on this record, though, with another power poppy gem that just rules. Outside of their first 7" have the MARKED MEN put out a bad song? I don't think so. Good luck finding this 7" because it was limited to 300, tour only. (JF)
(Swami, PO Box 620428, San Diego, CA 92162)







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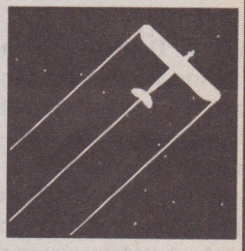

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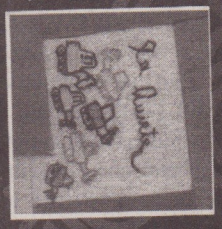

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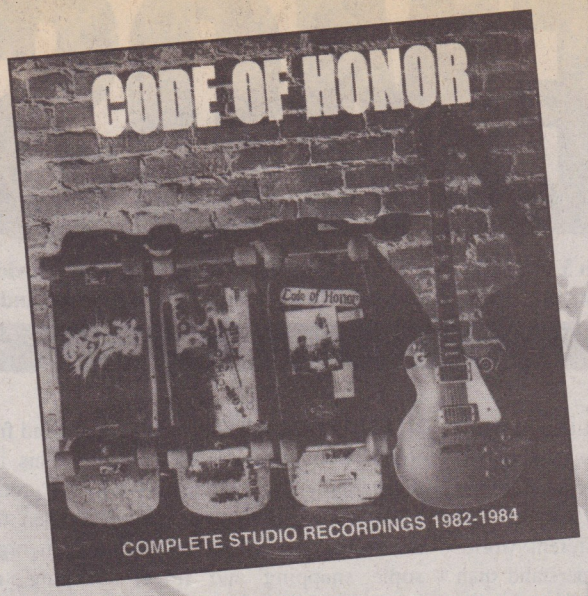

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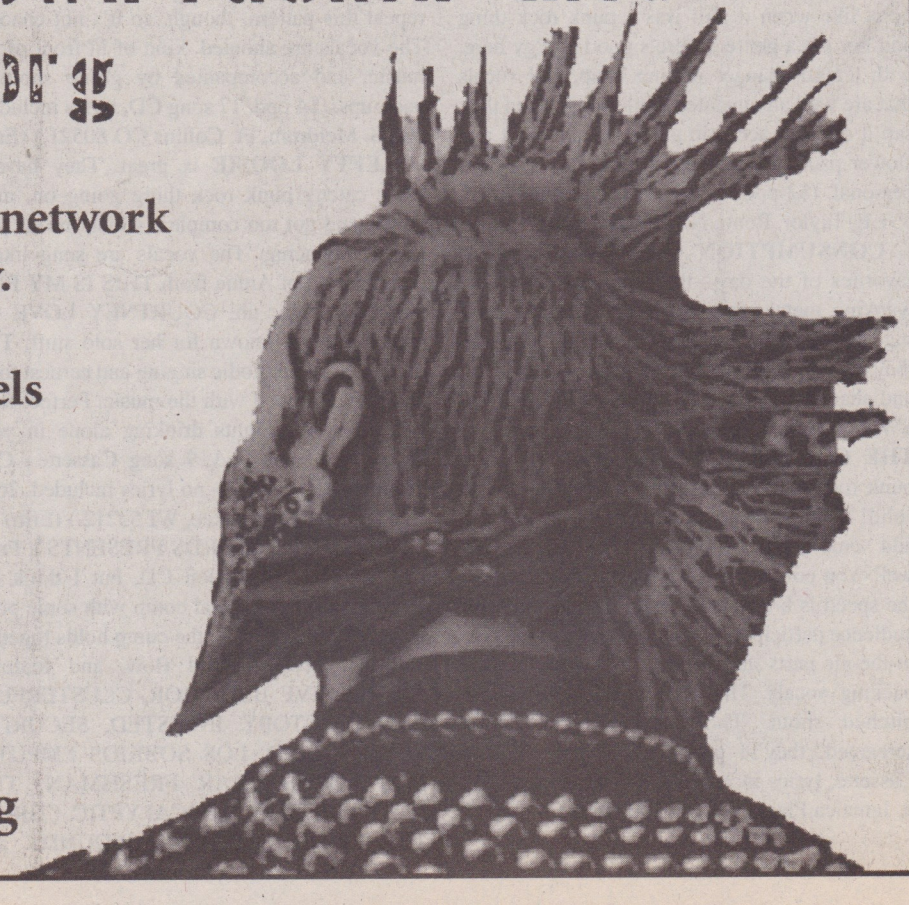

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DEMOS

Send demos and CD-Rs to: Erin Yanke, PO Box 1113, Portland, OR 97207. Please provide a postpaid price and a mailing address with your demo! Reviews by Peter Avery, Ariel Awesome, and Erin Yanke.

BEFORE AFTER plays mid-tempo hardcore, not falling easily into any sub genre or category. Straightforward, and angry but really reflecting that hardcore was once just a part of punk rock and not a whole different world. Vocals are shouted, easier to understand than most hardcore, and blend well with the music. Good work. ($3 ppd. 4 song Cassette, lyrics included. 3437 Post St. San Francisco, CA 94115.) (Erin)

BOB URH AND THE BARE BONES play simple swampy and dark songs that revolve around the vocals. There's sometimes more acoustic guitar involved, sometimes more electric, and lots of "guest" instrumentation, like organs, slide guitars, extra percussion, and that sort of thing. But still, this is pretty simple. Guess that's why they called it Bare Bones. (11 song CD, no lyrics included. 2237 Constance St. #2, New Orleans, LA 70130.) (Erin)

BOTH BLIND play a mid-'80s DC kind of emo, like when it still was a punk rock thing and not yet a genre. There's good energy here, with tempo changes mixing it up, and vocals that are well annunciated while sung. Then they sap it up with acoustic guitar involvement and slower pace, which is less powerful, but more personal. ($2 ppd. 7 song CD, lyrics included. 351 E. Taylor, Reno, NV 89502.) (Erin)

CONSUMPTION blends two common favorites of the day—thrashing hardcore, and wanking metal—into the dark, political, driving, and peppered with guitar solos hardcore they play. The vocals are shouted, and strident, and shared. (6 song CD, lyrics included. 1930 SW 13th Ave, Portland, OR 97201.) (Erin)

THE CONVERSIONS play good ol' mean punk rock. Who needs variety when this is so solid! There is some moodiness to the anger to add some depth. This demo is recorded really well. You could circle pit or dance to it easily; the speed is breakneck but not brutal. And, for audience participation they provide us with fist-in-the-air parts and group sing-a-longs to the backing vocals. The main vocals are a high-pitched shout. Though they're not quite screamed, they're pissed. ($2 ppd. 6 song Cassette, lyrics included. 29 Lourdes Ave. Apt 6, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130.) (Erin)

DISCONNECT is a fervent emo band from Reno, who are no longer playing. This is a discography CD, and covers a lot of ground. There's your basic emo template, then they mess around with tempo changes, an organ, some snapping and finger clapping, and acoustic versions of songs. Solid release. ($2 ppd. 30 song CD, lyrics included. 351 E. Taylor, Reno, NV 89502.) (Erin)

FOUND DEAD IN TRUNK plays an amalgamation of slow pop punk, and slow rockaroll punk. They mention ZEKE, but I think it's more like a slow PINK LINCOLNS. (6 song CD, no lyrics included. PO Box 380152, E. Hartford, CT 06138.) (Erin)

GUNS AND ROSA PARKS plays a smorgasbord of styles. They'll thrash it up for a while, then get kind of that crunchy metal sound going on, and throw in some youth crew influences, add in a funny sample, play something mid-tempo or straightforward, etc. They repeat this pattern, though, so it's not chaotic. The vocals are shouted, kind of in front of the music, and accompanied by group shouting back-ups. ($4 ppd. 17 song CD, lyrics included. 608 S. Meldrum, Ft. Collins CO 80521.) (Erin)

LEFTY LOOSIE is great. They have a basic catchy punk rock thing going on, mid-tempo and not too complex, which means perfect for dancing. The vocals are sung like a combination of Annie from THIS IS MY FIST and Lois from, uh, COURTNEY LOVE but probably more known for her solo stuff. That translates into melodic singing and earnest tone, and they mix well with the music. Perfect for a party, and for nights drinking alone in your room. Yeah! ($3 ppd. 9 song Cassette—CDs available on request— no lyrics included. 2615 N. Pierce St, Milwaukee, WI 53212.) (Erin)

LESS ART RECORDS PRESENTS a Punk and Thrash Compilation CD, but I think it's more a thrash and metal comp with some punk on it. With that caveat, the comp holds together well, has really good flow, and features AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR, CLUSTERFUX, END OF STORY, INFESTED, SECURITY THREAT, SMD, LOS SOBRIOS EMPUTADOS FORTH YEAR FRESHMAN, THE LAST PRIORITY, APOCALYPTIC CHRIST, THE REVOLTS, SALTED WOUNDS, and COUNTDOWN TO ARMAGEDDON. ($5 ppd. 13 bands and 25 songs, no lyrics included. PO Box 16328, Golden CO 80401.) (Erin)

THE LITTLE TRIGGERS play energetic melodic punk that's vocally a tiny bit gruff, but that's the only sandpaper involved. It's not too saccharine, though. They would be just fine in the No Idea catalogue. (2 song CD, no lyrics included. 6038 N. Knoll Ave, Fresno CA 93711.) (Erin)

THE MEGACOOLS are an introspective and well-composed band. They fool around within the confines of the rock genre pretty well, while keeping the tempo slow and the instrumentation simple. They're an instrumental band, and would make for a good soundtrack to home movies. (8 song CD, no lyrics included. 2685 Freeport Blvd, Sacramento, CA 95818.) (Erin)

MELEE ATTACK is what happens to the bored in Florida these days. Frantic strumming on an electric guitar, grindcore ranting sung over it. They call it Fuckin Talentless Trash Thrash, and who am I to disagree? ($3 ppd. 3 song Cassette, no lyrics. P. O. Box 5664, Spring Hill, Florida 34611.) (Erin)

PRETTY BOY THORTON AND THE FALLING ANGELS have the charm of the pop punk scrappy sing-along bands, and the mean misunderstood heart of wastoid country punk rockers. Sentimental, simple, and energetic, played with a mix of acoustic and electric instruments. ($3 ppd. 7 song CD, no lyrics included. 1821 E. Howell St., Seattle WA 98122.) (Erin)

RAD TIMES plays slow to mid-tempo catchy political punk rock. The catchiness is without pop sensibilities, although there is some jangly business underneath going on. The vocals have a gruffness to their singing, but are spoken a little bit in every song it seems. They manage to portray eagerness and a kick back attitude at the same time, a hard balance to keep, but they do so well. ($2 ppd. 6 song CD, lyrics included. 351 E. Taylor, Reno, NV 89502.) (Erin)

REAGAN'S BONES plays trashy lo-fi, three chords and all heart punk rock. Chaotic, but melodic mid-tempo music with ranting vocals over it all, and good screams! They cover

"Bourgeois Pig" by THE DICKS, all right! ($3 ppd. 8 song Cassette, no lyrics included. 37 Mullberry St., Asheville, NC 28809.)(Erin)

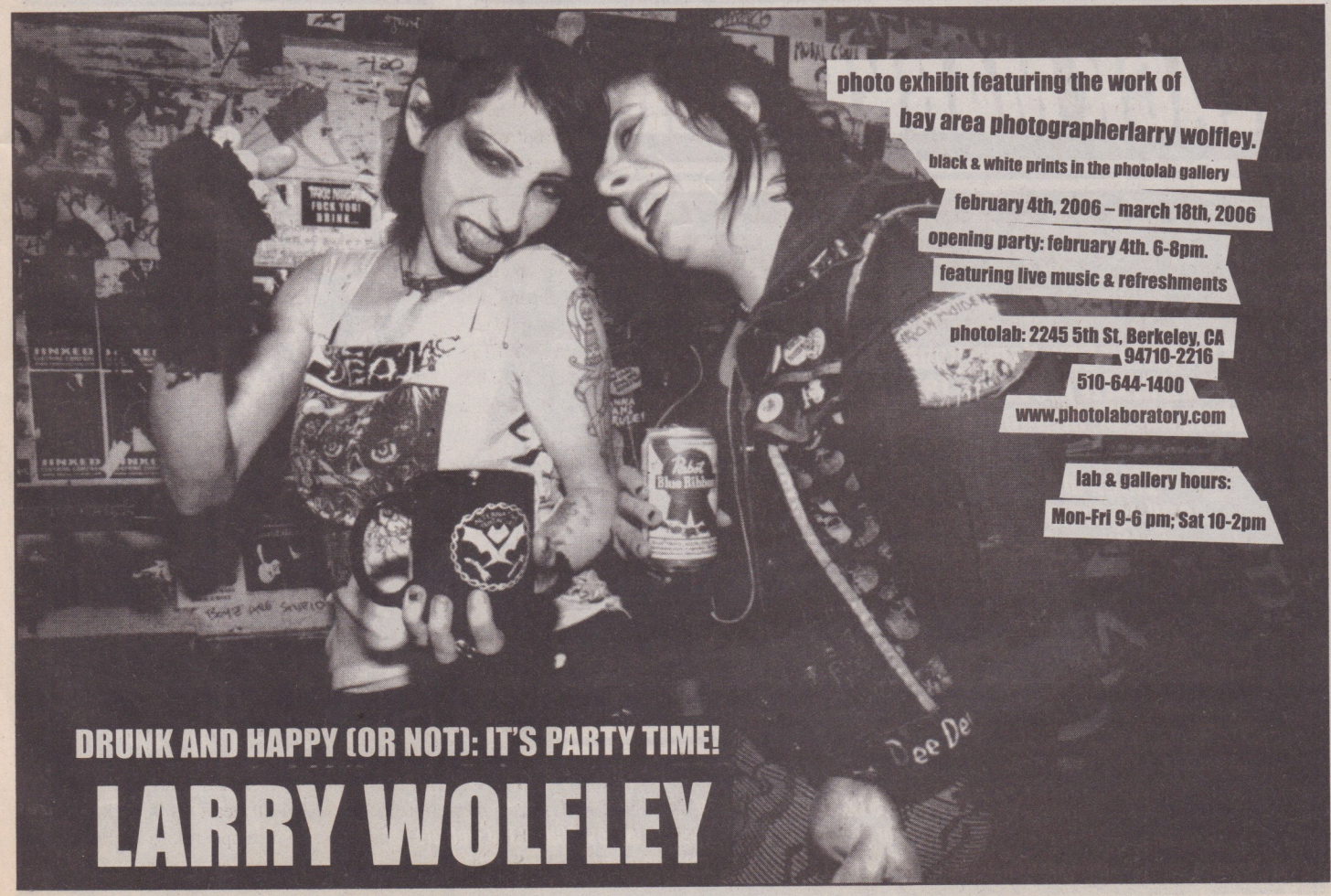
REAL UGLY plays music with equal parts metal—what with all the sounds and the proficiency of guitar riffs—and punk, what with the fast pace, the growling and desperate vocals, and the short and in your face songs. ($4 ppd. 14 song CD, no lyrics included. PO Box 721, Frazer, PA 19355.) (Erin)

THE SKUDS still have the metal guitar tinges to the punk rock, but they're totally rippin' solid thrashing it up, too! Except for the evil death mosh parts, of course. Vocals are shouted, and seem more frantic and out of control than in the past, but I like it; it matches the intensity of the music. ($3 ppd. 4 song Cassette, lyrics included. 804 Ellis St. Apt. B, Augusta, GA 30901.) (Erin)

SOCIAL CIRCKLE seems equally into the newer punk rock bands from Denmark and Sweden, and old East Coast Punk before the macho hardcore really took over. That means, they sound more snotty and confrontational than the European darlings, but rock just as hard. The more I listen, the more I can hear the influences of punk greats, but not enough to call any of it a knock off (which is why I'm avoiding naming specific bands. Fine, okay, how about ANGRY SAMOANS and THE PANIC for a start. But no, they don't *only* sound like those bands!). Really now, this is fucking great, and I'm sure you'll all be clamoring for their 7"s soon enough. So beat the rush, and get the demo! ($3 ppd. 8 song Cassette, no lyrics included. PO Box 1462, Boston MA 02117.) (Erin)

TOXIC VOMIT and **SNIVELING CUNTS** send us in a split demo. TOXIC VOMIT likes movie samples, and playing trashy fast thrash that's got a franticness to it before it gets sucked into the grindcore tornado. They also delve into metal moments quite often. But, they do a great cover of "Cocaine Blues" by our dear departed JOHNNY CASH. Hell yeah! SNIVLELING CUNTS has a more high-end sound, but are more consistently in a state of frenzy. The vocals are super fast, one high pitched, and one just pissed off, but not demonic. (TV play 5 songs, no lyrics included, and SC have 7 songs, with no lyrics included. 499 NW 69th Place, Ankeny, IA 50023-9540.) (Erin)

YOUNG LIONS have more outright poppiness than the rest of the Reno bands of the month, but still contain plenty of the patented heartfelt style, and other clues of emo underneath. It reminds me of the Plan-it X Records sound, but more serious. They share that same determination to have a new world based on bike riding, killer basement shows, catchy pop punk, and sing-a-long songs. ($2 ppd. 6 song CD, lyrics included. 351 E. Taylor, Reno, NV 89502.) (Erin)



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ZINES

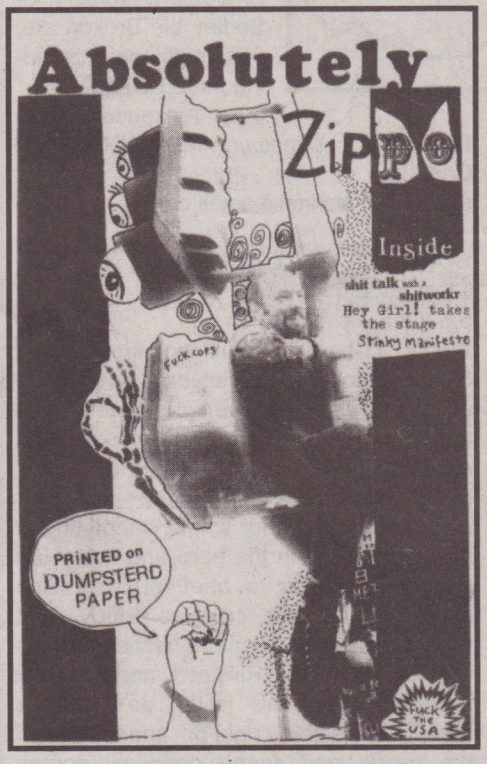
Reviews by: Aragorn (AR), Heather Blotto (HB), Paul Curran (PC), Mikel Delgado (MD), Layla Gibbon (LG), Cassie Harwood (CH), Harald Hartmann (HH), Nick Mangel (NM), Jeff Mason (JM), Golnar Nikpour (GN), Casey Ress (CR), Andy Shoup (AS), Thera Webb (TW).

Send zines for review to: MRR, PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146. Please include the following info on a separate piece of paper with your zine: postpaid price, international price, do you take trades?, size, copied or printed?, number of pages, language, mailing address, website address, email address.

A BEAT OF OUR OWN #1 / $2
8.5 x 11 – printed – 32 pgs
This zine is mostly interviews, and many of them: Anti-Nowhere League, the Detonators, Jim Testa/Jersey Beat, George Tabb and Mission of Burma. For the most part, the interviews are short, not very in-depth and suffer from weak layout. However, it looks like a lot of effort went into this, so I would encourage the editors to focus a little more on having fun with the interview process and trying to make the layouts more appealing to readers. Decent start, with plenty of potential. (MD)
Jared / PO Box 7066 / Hampton, VA 23666
misenplace2@hotmail.com

ABSOLUTELY ZIPPO Jan. 2006 / $1, 3 stamps, or trade
5.5 x 8 – printed – 24 pgs
Thanks to the quality "dumpsterd" (sic) paper this is printed on, it'll still be in good shape when you're rotting away and your kids are pitching your shit, muttering about all trash you saved as a Bay Area punk history archivist. Most of this issue is given over to interviewing longtime Gilman shitworker Jemel, and the new SF band Hey Girl! These talks are pretty detailed, if at times the details are a bit extraneous, and thankfully have a distinct character, perhaps honed over the many years this rag's been published. So if you're interested in this sort of thing, get *Absolutely Zippo* for sure. As a bonus there is a short piece complaining about the privilege people who don't stink receive in our fucked society. (JM)
PO Box 4985 / Berkeley, CA 94704

AK INK #17 / $1 or trade
7 x 8.5 – copied – 22 pgs
AK INK is a sweet, collaborative fanzine from Anchorage, Alaska that includes a good variety of topics and styles of writing. There are thoughtful, honest record reviews, and a local show report/review. It also has instructions for a DIY craft project, some endearing punk fiction, video reviews, an interview, and some fake-as-fuck "horror scopes." It's the kind of fanzine that would be most entertaining and interesting to people who are involved in the scene it represents (Anchorage punks). It's awesome that the editor encourages people to contribute, since the collaborative aspect of the zine makes it a true community forum. (HB)

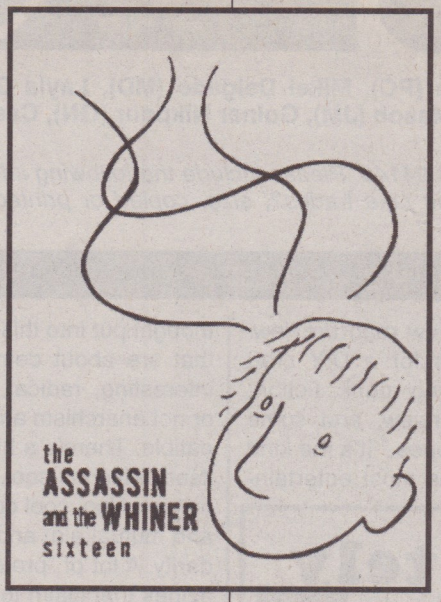


AK Ink / PO Box 244235 / Anchorage, AK 99524
jennink@hotmail.com

ANARCHY: A JOURNAL OF DESIRE ARMED #60, Vol 23, No 2 / $4.95
8.5 x 11 – printed – 86 pgs
The Democracy issue! There was a lot of thought put into this issue, and the articles that are about democracy present some interesting, radical, ideas about whether or not anarchism and democracy are compatible. There's a history of the magazine itself, which is cool, and a bunch of world history. Also, cool column on New Orleans and mutual aid, and one on Italy and solidarity. A lot of "professional" looking magazines that claim to be anarchist are pretty freaking boring, and too text book-y for my taste, but the articles in *Anarchy* were really good, and not mind numbingly preachy. I even came away with some new things to think about regarding assimilation and anarchist goals. However, for a magazine that has obviously put a lot of thought into their articles and presentation, it's hard for me to believe that they didn't notice that *all* of the articles in this issue are written by dudes. Gimme a break. (TW)
PO Box 3448 / Berkeley, CA 94703
www.anarchymag.org

THE ASSASSIN & THE WHINER #16 / $2
4.25 x 5.5 – copied – 56 pgs
This is a little comic zine and this issue is all about depression. I read this and I felt like I was seeing a mirror of myself from only a few months ago when I was declared by a doc as severely depressed. Man, what a shitty feeling! Not being able to concentrate or find fun in anything, and being scared and overwhelmed by nothing and everything, and mostly just wanting to sleep and sleep. These comics are from a year ago and I hope that by now the girl who drew this isn't feeling so shitty. Cause that shit sucks, man, and no one should feel like that. Maybe you feel like you aren't getting anything accomplished but publishing a zine is more than a lot of people ever get around to, okay? I hope you feel better. (CH)
PO Box 49403 / Los Angeles, CA 90049
cmcninch@gmail.com

BACK2FRONT #1 / $5 US, £1.50 UK, 3€ world
7.75 x 12 – printed – 28 pgs
No ads (well, one small one), no reviews, and tiny type mean there's plenty to read in here. That's not always good, because it seems the editor didn't reject any material, like the article claming a strong one world government is the solution to overpopulation. But there's worthwhile material as well, including interviews with old school superstars MDC, Subhumans, Lost Cherees, and Psycho Faction. Maybe you've already read 1,000 interviews with these bands, but these are all right. A lot of space is given over to philosophical ideas related to punk. One of these discusses the historical roots of the concept of freedom, schooling us on the Stoics and all that, while another looks at the history of punk and how different ideas have come into play and been challenged. If you are nostalgic for pixilated graphics that look the worse for it, the radical/situationist ones here will tide you over 'til your next visit to the Internet. Overall, the quality/quantity ratio is too low to make this worth five bucks to me. I'd love to see a tighter second issue. (JM)



Back2front / Box F / 67 Tannaghmore Rd / Ballymahinch / BT24 8NU / N. Ireland

BOOTS AND KITTY CHRONICALS #1 / 50¢
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 16 pgs
Boots and Kitty is a handwritten, kinda sloppy, but generally well-done zine. The articles are short illustrated vignettes about travel, music, and being young in North Dakota. Including the cat is a nice touch. A little sloppy, but a nice start. (CR)
Jesse Fevold / PO Box 313 / Newton, ND 58767
jessebob90@yahoo.com

BORN DEAD #7 / $1
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 26 pgs
This Canadian fanzine features Maryland Deathfest 3, Bile, and Impending Doom. It's full of cynicism and negativity, along with genuine enthusiasm for blacking out and seeing obscure Scandinavian metal bands play. There's also a well-thought-out spread about why the pope sucked so bad, which was written immediately after the guy's death, which is pretty righteous. Finally, this zine includes a couple of articles at the end about current Canadian political figures. Overall, it's really well written, funny, and informative. Oh yeah, and it comes with a juvenile and marginally incoherent "human garbage" computer drawing comic on the back. Even if you don't know who Bile, Amoebic Dysentery, or Bodies Lie Broken are, you might enjoy reading this. (HB)
Mike Alexander / 929 Fleet Ave / Winnipeg, MB / RKM 1K4 Canada
alexander.michael@gmail.com

BORN TWENTY YEARS TOO LATE #5 / $1 or trade
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 34 pgs
A cool DIY hardcore punk zine that focuses on the black-clad, bullet belt side of the spectrum (as evidenced by interviews with thrash metal/HC heroes Onslaught and classic UK82 punx the Partisans), *B20YTL*—despite it's name—still has ample enthusiasm for what's happening in the punk scene in the here and now. Rad fliers and photos, a brief interview with Japanese metallic crusters Effigy, and record reviews that feature between bands like Religious War, Riiistetyt, and Contrast Attitude fill out this issue. Jo's attitude about punk is pretty right on, and his love of the music and scene definitely comes through in the pages of his zine. Apparently, he is facing prison time for assault & shoplifting charges, so support a fellow DIY punker and order his zine 'cause it's a worthwhile read. (GN)
Jo / 92 Riel / Gatineau, Quebec / J8Y 5Y2 / CANADA
tehamebix@yahoo.com

BOXCUTTER #11 / $?
4 x 5 – copied – 24 pgs
On my list of things that should be edited out of one's zine are: poetry, random lists, pointless, rambling emails, and stream-of-consciousness writing in which you attempt to capture the amazingness of life but really just sound like a new-ager. Sadly, these things all appear in this tiny zine! (I know many folks would have "Crimethinc. reprints" on their lists, and be further vexed, but to each their own.) On the plus side, there is a photograph of a Thai band and some writing on the Bangkok indie music scene. Gracias no. (JM)
Tomas / 1636 Fairview St. / Berkeley, CA 94703

CHOROBA MYSLI #2 / $3
8 x 6 – printed – 36 pgs – Czech
This small fanzine has a smart look and packed a lot of interest. There are a couple of band interviews including Squatting Rabies, Nesoucast Stroje, FSA, and Hellnation. There is definitely an anarchist edge to this fanzine with excellent graphics, book reviews and a political insert on the issues surrounding Middle Europe's entry into the NATO alliance. This pamphlet would be an interesting read in English. There are also record reviews, some ads, and contact addresses. Check out the Czech scene, read *Choroba Mysli*! (HH)
Martin Boranek / Vinarickeho 416 / 397 01 / Pisek / Czech Republic
www.prustrel@centrum.cz
www.vaclav6@centrum.cz

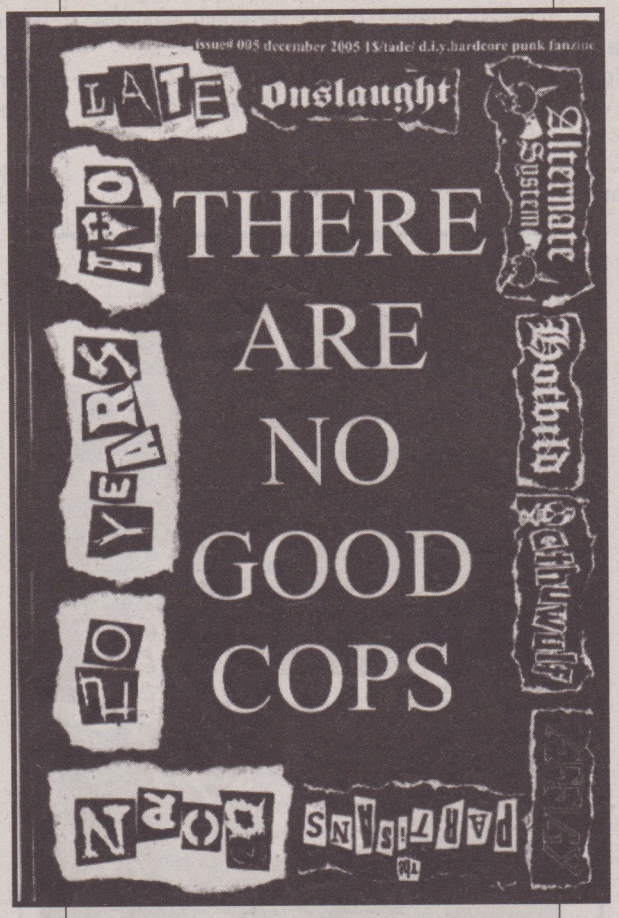
CONTEXT CLUES #1 / $1 or 3 stamps or trade
5.5 x 55 – copied – 52 pgs
Proof that it is possible to create a unique interesting personal zine that is neither unduly nostalgic nor predictably self-refer-

ential; *Context Clues* is an interesting well-made exception. The art in this cut and paste zine perfectly compliments the insightful writing. This issue includes articles about growing up, mentoring a young girl, interactions with strangers at the laundromat, and dozens of clippings and musings create a zine that's interesting and engaging. More than worth your time and money. (CR)
Context Clues / c/o Sheila Fuentes / 1235 N. Main Ave / Floor 2 (side) / Scranton, PA 18508-2129
Sheilafuentes@hotmail.com

DOLL #221 / $?
8.5 x 11 – printed – 230 pgs
Woah, I have never gotten this for review before, but you probably know about this right? Japanese punk magazine with the most intense ad section full of records you will never even see much less hear. It's cool to flip through this—I wish I read Japanese. There's a feature on Don Letts, I think in regards to that movie he just did, EDPS, THE SKA FLAMES, LRF, CITY INDIAN, GOD'S GUTS, PRAMBATH... (LG)
No. 303 / Aota Bldg. / 3-1-9 Kita, Kohenji / Suginanami-ku / Tokyo / Japan

EAST VILLAGE INKY #29 / $2
4.25 x 5.5 – copied – 40 pgs
The cat memorial issue! I love *East Village Inky*. This issue contains memories of Ayun's family and their recently departed cat, Jambo, who will come back from the dead and claw my eyes out if I give his tribute a less than glowing review. Even if I wasn't being threatened by a dead cat, I would still sing the praises of this issue of *EVI*. Full of hilariously mean cats, silly kids, and embarrassing anecdotes, this is much better than a run of the mill personal zine. It's not super self-indulgent, and the author obviously doesn't take herself too seriously, which is pretty damn refreshing. Not to mention, I'm a sucker for humor, animals, and little kids. Maybe you are too. If you're not, you might be after this. It reads like a good, super short memoir or something. It also comes with funny illustrations for the stories. Not funny as in shitty cartoons, really, more like funny as in good and true to life. (TW)
Ayun Halliday / PO Box 22754 / Brooklyn, NY 11202
www.ayunhaliday.com
ayun@ayunhalliday.com

ENTER THE NINETIES: POETS, PUNKS, POLITICS / $2
8.5 x 11 – copied – 44 pgs
Over time, I've forgotten exactly what my first show at ABC No Rio was. It was sometime in the mid 90s—about a decade ago now—and proved to be the first of countless times I spent in that building, mostly watching hardcore and punk bands. ABC is the greatest DIY punk venue I've ever been to, because not only has it provided years and years of an alternative to the crisis of public or affordable art/DIY space in NYC, but also because it retains the immediacy and intimacy of a basement or warehouse show. Absolutely nothing about No Rio could confuse someone into thinking they were at a rock club. Frankly, many of the best and most fun shows of my life have been there, though in recent years it seems that no Rio has become somewhat detached from the international hardcore punk community. This is the fourth installment in a series of history zines about No Rio, which is a former squat turned mostly legal, all-ages punk show space, political hub, poetry space, and artists' meeting point. Because No Rio and NYC punk and politics mean a lot to me, I was really excited about this zine, but I think that this history is pretty essential for anyone interested in DIY hardcore, alternative spaces, or anything at all having to do with this world we call punk rock. Compiled as an oral history of the main players of early No Rio punk history, this installment deals with the origins of the hardcore matinee at ABC, and features insightful, interesting commentary from Mike Bullshit, Melissa York, Esneider from Huasipungo, Charles Maggio, Chris(tine) Boarts, Fly, and other ABC stalwarts. It is edited very well, which makes the story flow quite seamlessly. These halcyon days of ABC were made up of a handful of dedicated punks (and activists and poets) who braved the drug trafficking on New York's Lower East Side and a very inhospitable NYC government to really create a space of their own. It was (and remains to this day) a constant struggle with an often-unwelcoming city, but so far ABC No Rio has persevered. *Enter the Nineties* comes with a little compendium zine called *Tell Me About the First Time You Came to ABC No Rio*, which has little stories from past and current ABC volunteers about just that. This mini-zine is cool, but not as interesting or well put together as the main work itself. Compiled by ABC-er Vikki Law, the story of ABC No Rio deserves a real deal book sort of thing (and more interesting layout than that featured in this zine), *a la* the *924 Gilman* book compiled by Brian Edge that came out last year; it is a fucking excellent and totally mandatory read. (Look for parts of this oral history to appear in the pages of *MRR* soon.) (GN)
Black Star Publishing / PO Box 20948 / New York, NY 10009



EQUALIZING DISTORT #5 / donation
8.5 x 11 – copied – 22 pgs
Equalizing Distort is a zine that is transcribed from a radio show aired in Canada. It's done in a really nice newsletter style format. It covers lots of Canadian punk/hardcore bands and also has interviews with touring bands that come through the area. This issue has an interview with Limpwrist as well as interviews with Kruw and the 3tards. This guy wrote up show reviews and record finds from a trip he took to Japan. Also there are a bunch of in-depth record reviews, show listings, and music news, which I think can all be heard over the radio on CIUT 89.5 FM Sundays from 10pm-midnight in Toronto. People

who donate to the radio show get the zine as a sort of bonus, but even if you can't tune into the station it's totally worth the donation to get the actual zine. (CH)
91 St. George St. / Toronto, ON / M5S 2E8 / Canada
equalizingxdistort@ciut.fm

FREE SOCIETY #16 / $2.00
4.25 x 8.5 – copied – 60 pgs
A really thick long running zine straight outta OR. The first part is the editor griping about a bad review in *MRR,* which was kind of annoying to read... Then a section of the music that hit him in the guts this year, from my roommate's old band Strawman to This Is My Fist. Bay Area represent! I like reading top ten style lists, and this was no exception. There are other pieces on traveling adventures, DIY fests, swimming holes, and the politics of skateboarding... A lot of photos of the editor and his friends. I like zines that are able to convey some kind of the personality through the writing, where you get a sense of the life behind the paper, and this definitely has that. There's a big section in the back of Internet news reprints in regards to the Chiapas struggle for independence. (LG)
freesociety@hotmail.com

THE INNER SWINE vol. 11, #4 / $2
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 62 pgs
The Inner Swine is one of those zines that I read and breathe a sigh of satisfied relief, stoked that there are still people doing zines that are original, amusing, and most importantly, filled with awesome writing. The dude who does this one (Jeff Somers), writes articles about his New Years resolutions, the impermanence of data, exercise an essay on "how to seem smart," even a piece about his fucking bunions, fer chrissakes, and somehow, it's all reasonably entertaining and funny. Take note zine editors: it almost doesn't even matter what you write or make art about. It only matters that it's done well, and with some passion. Get this one. (AS)
PO Box 3024 / Hoboken NJ 07030
www.innerswine.com

INSURGENT 17.2 / Free for prisoners and students, $15 for subscription
12 x 15 – printed – 28 pgs
There's a lot of stuff going on in this newspaper. Some of it is really cool, like the animal liberation centerfold, and the DIY distillery and urban foraging. Some of it was pretty boring, like the recount of fun times at Burningman. And some of it was stuff that I already knew about, like the WTO and Critical Mass, and some "whirled" (world) news. But I think it's important to be reminded about the issues of today, even though I'm no fresh faced, U of O student, I didn't mind. This is probably especially good if you live on campus, because it has a list of events that are happening. But please, please, don't ever spell "Kalendar" like that again. (TW)
UofO Insurgent / St 1 / 1228 U of Oregon / Erb Memorial Union / University of Oregon / Eugene, OR 97403
sialtmedia@hotmail.com

LITTLE LIES: AUDIO ZINE / $3
cassette tape
Sometimes it's nice to listen to people tell stories at parties or when you're hanging out, so an audio zine usually seems like a good idea. DIY books on tape; cool! The idea driving this zine is interesting as well, the person who put it got in touch with kids who write zines he likes, and had them read their stories on a shitty tape recorder. This could conceivably be really great: real people telling their stories, recorded in real time on the first take. And, I think that the idea of taping spontaneous stories being told—like the one being told on the roof of some crazy party— is cool, but the fact is, this tape was kind of unmistakable in parts. Sadly, putting a tape recorder in front of a good storyteller does not a good recorded story make. People get nervous about telling stories, they pause in awkward places, they don't read things smoothly and, really, who do you know who sounds good talking on a recording? That being said, the stories were interesting for the most part. The one story about Mexico seemed a little too "guess about the crazy things that happened in this crazy country" where (add generalizations about how all Mexican kids are young, leftist punx who are really into American crust) and, frankly, I found it to be an exercise in romanticizing and exoticisng the idea of working class people in other countries. I also pretty much feel that way about the poem on the second side, about how rough life is. I'm not sure why an excerpt from Annie John by Jamaica Kincaid was read, or why a Dido song was on there between stories. Even the sort of awkward vocal patterns of the speakers got more palatable over time, but I'm still not entirely sold on it. I suppose if you really like audio zines my opinions won't hold much water, and you will want to buy this. But, I bet there are better audio zines out there. (TW)
9 King Ave. Apt. 5/ Columbus, OH 43201
bikeamusprime@hotmail.com

NERVE #7 / free or donation
8.5 x 11.5 – printed – 32 pgs
The success of this Liverpool based, art and politics zine is the local focus. The articles on environmental pollutants in the home, marijuana abuse, road safety, and busking are all specifically about the effects of these issues in the Liverpool / Merseyside area. It's much more interesting reading how these issues affect people on the local level than reading abstract diatribes on the evils of capitalism. Very well put together, clean without being overly slick, *Nerve* also contains an update on the Liverpool dockworkers, a look at the way mental illness is viewed in this word, and reflections on Bosnia. It's quite an impressive zine. Though the zine is free, help out these folks with a donation if you're going to send for this one. (CR)
mail@catalystmedia.org.uk

THE NEW SCHEME #13 / free
8.5 x 11 – printed – 56 pgs
Coming straight outta Boulder, Colorado, *The New Scheme* boasts interviews with Achilles, New Electric, and the Life and Times, as well as record and book reviews. The writing in this one is pretty solid, the

graphic elements a little less so. If indie/emo stuff is your bag, I'm sure you'll like this zine. (AS)
PO Box 7542 / Boulder, CO 80306-7542

OBLIVIOUS NATION fall issue / $3
8.5 x 5.5 – copied – 44 pgs
This is done by a lady in San Jose who calls herself Miss Oblivious. There are lots of pictures of Bay Area bands in this zine as well as details of shows she booked and/or attended. There was a cool story about her trip to L.A. to appear as an extra in the Germs movie. This lady likes the Germs so much she named her daughter Darby. Dude. Also there are pictures from a recent Adolescents show in here. Man it is weird getting used to how a band looks on the back of their record and then seeing them now and realizing they're like 25 years older than they used to be and totally almost geezers. Well it was cool seeing them in this zine man. Read on for a review of the next issue of *Oblivious Nation*... (CH)
PO Box 111 / San Martin, CA / 95046
sailorhank2000@yahoo.com

OBLIVIOUS NATION winter issue / $3
8.5 x 5.5 – copied – 48 pgs
In this issue Miss Oblivious becomes Mrs. Oblivious when she marries her true love. Pictures and commentary on Unit Breed, Fleshies, The Gender, and others. This issue had lots going on as far as pictures and stuff but seemed a little sparse in other areas. (CH)
PO Box 111 / San Martin, CA / 95046 /
sailorhank2000@yahoo.com

PEOPS #3 / $6
8.5 x 5.5 – copied – 32 pgs
You may have seen a lot of these drawings / interviews before, gracing the pages here at *MRR*, so maybe you don't want to have to shell out six bucks for this zine. (Fly does offer her apologies for the price hike. She lost her free copies hookup, but hopefully somebody in NYC will help her out, because $6 is a little pricey.) This is pretty much what you should have come to expect from Fly—cool drawings of people, with their own words telling their individual stories sort of floating on the paper around their heads. All of the people in this issue seem to be activist types, for all different issues, which is pretty rad. There's a good representation of people of different genders and ages, and that's nice to see. And, while you might not be able to recognize all of these people on the streets from their drawings, who says that's the point anyway? (TW)
Fly / PO Box 1318 / Cooper Station / New York, NY 10276
fly@bway.net / www.bway.net/~fly

PIPE BOMB #33 & 34 / $1 each
8.5 x 5.5 – copied – 34 & 30 pgs
This is one of those great-for-a-bus-ride zines, you know, full of spark and wit and like a nice conversation with a friend but maybe not the deepest shit you're ever gonna read. Chelsea's writing and comics definitely made me laugh out loud a bunch of times, as did the hilarious copy of a "review"/note that one of her friend's moms wrote to him about reading the zine: "Ian, I read this "magazine." Please do not bring something like this into my home again. I want to know exactly what Food Not Bombs is really about." There is stuff about being trapped in high school and failing classes, there are goofy little drawings scattered throughout, and there are the witty (aforementioned) comics. Overall, the layout of the zine is a little scattered, and the pages that were all text were a bit hard on the eyes, but if you see this lying around I would not hesitate to pick it up and thumb through it—you are sure to get a laugh or two out of the deal. (GN)
Chelsea / 228 E. Clayton St. / Athens, GA 30601
zinepipebomb@yahoo.com

RATCHARGE #6666 / trade
8 x 6 – copied – 20 pgs – French
This is a cut-and-paste, do-it-yourself, front porch fanzine for all those who want to know about the underground French scene in New Zealand. The fanzine is called *Ratcharge* because Alex the editor likes rats, and the band Discharge. OK, inside is an interview with the band Thrash Manu. There are some skateboard drawings, and some intimate photos, and some articles on random moments of punk. Overall, all I can honestly write is that Alex is a cool dude so check out his fanzine and send him yours! (HH)
Alex c/o Ladyfest Wellington / PO Box 16036 / Wellington South / New Zealand

RIOT 77 #8 and #9 / £3
8.25 x 11.75 – printed – 52 pgs
Here is a glossy black-and-white zine from Dublin, Ireland. It features almost exclusively bands made up of old white dudes, and bands that were big in the early 80s. Issue #8 has interviews with 7 Seconds, Sabrejets, Los Fastidios, and the Radiators, while issue #9 has the Vandals, the Saints, X (the L.A. one, of course), and Lars Frederiksen. Some high points are the record reviews because they showcase a lot of European bands, and the live show reviews because it's like a cosmic window into the Dublin underground punk scene...complete with photos of Greenday, Motörhead, the Hives, Mission of Burma, Blackalicious, Iggy Pop, Against Me!, NOFX, and more. They also have movie/DVD reviews, and their ad space is really cheap (e.g., $25/half page). (HB)
Cian Hynes / 31 St. Patrick's Park / Clondalkin / Dublin 22 / Ireland
relandriot77magazine@hotmail.com

SEVEN INCHES TO FREEDOM #2 / $1 or trade
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 36 pgs
Nice HC zine with lots of spirit and enthusiasm for DIY. There's a guide to putting on a show, a debate about Myspace, the history of the local music scene (being Sunny Naples, FL). I really enjoyed the stories of "my first punk record" and there are lots of reviews of overlooked records. There's personality throughout. This is my idea of what a zine should be in many ways. (MD)
Joe Lachut / 2163 Hoople St / Ft Myers, FL 33901
hiszeroisgone@yahoo.com

SKYSCRAPER #20 / $5
8.5 x 11 – printed – 140 pgs
This is more of a magazine than a fanzine, and seems to cover music more in the indie rock and art-rock (for lack of a better term) scenes, so if that is your cup of tea you might enjoy this. There are lots of interviews: Animal Collective, Deerhoof, Quintron & Miss Pussycat, Quicksand, Clap Your Hands Say Yeah, XBXRX and others. I was amazed at how there is a

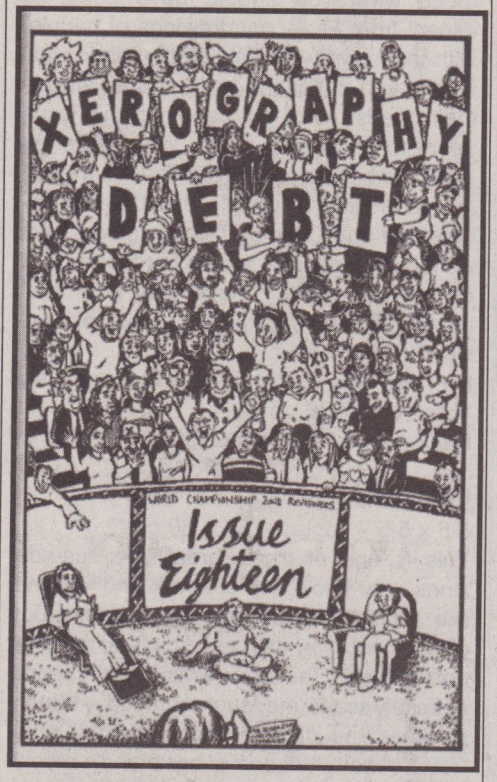
review section just for punk/hc/indie reissues. It seems like most of the interviews focus on labels and influences and the sorts of things that tend to make bands sound like pretentious jerks and create more of a divide between bands and fans. In general I was left wondering what *Skyscraper* really has to do with the current punk scene. (MD)
PO Box 4432 / Boulder, CO 80306
skyscraperzine@hotmail.com

TAG, YOU'RE GOD! / $?
5.5 x 8 – copied – 48 pgs
Who wants to read the mundane details of your road trip? "... then we got coffee and walked around..." (I paraphrase here.) Even though the road trip is a tour for his one-man band, this is still dull like the second day on the bus. If you are interested in which girls he had a crush on (hint: every one), your curiosity will be sated. Otherwise you ain't missin' nothin'. (JM)
Michael Barton / 3230 Eagle Point West / Belton, TX 76513

THERMIDOR #3 / $2 or trade
8.5 x 6.5 – copied – 52 pages
Pretty good zine here, covers all kinds of stuff from Women's Roller Derbies, to an interview with a former cult member (really interesting), to travel stories, all done in a personal zine type approach. Well done, good layout too. Not generally my thing but certainly of the better ones of that category (NM)
Kate Duffy / 914 S Farragut St Apt 3 / Philadelphia, PA 19143
www.thermidor.net

TRUST #114 / $4
8 x 11 – printed – German – 70 pgs
This is the fall issue, and it is an exceptionally good issue featuring an in depth interview with Ani Defranco, and the bands Drunk, Four Letter Word, William Elliot Withmore, Just Went Black, and Campary Records. There are also the customary columns, and new record reviews. There are also plenty of cool photos, cool graphics and ads. I should point out there were six pages of gig listings. It sure looks like there are lots of bands touring in Germany, hmmm! (HH)
Dolf Hermannstaedter / Postfach 11 07 62 / 28087 Bremen / Germany
www.trust-zine.de

TURNING THE TIDE Vol 18 #1 / $?
8.5 x 22 – newsprint – 8 pgs
This edition of the journal of Anti-Racist Action features a continuing piece on climate change and the politics of oil and how that interrelates with other issues in the activist community. There's writing about life in New Orleans after Katrina and liberal complacency in the mainstream media in regards to the war in Iraq and Bush. There are also reprints from the GI resistance newsletter and an interesting piece on Brazilian descendents of runaway slaves. (LG)
ARA-PART / PO Box 1055 / Culver City, CA 90232



UNDER THE VOLCANO #89 / $3.95
8.5 x 11 – printed – 56 pgs
Under the Volcano is one of those kinds of zines you see a lot of these days. Their format is like the TV listings that come with the Sunday paper: 8.5 x 11, black and white, printed on newsprint, and about 60 pages long. More often than not, they are about as interesting as the TV listings. *Under the Volcano* is a little better, but somehow reminds me of the sort of zine I saw around SF a lot in the early to mid nineties: some reviews, some commentary, an interview with Jello and the Melvins. It even has a cover that steals some graphic elements from Frank Kozik. On the plus side, they do use that awesome typewriter font, and their reviews are fairly entertaining, but nothing about this one really gets me going. (AS)
PO Box 236 / Nesconset, NY 11767

WE'RE GONNA FIGHT #8 / $?
8.5 x 6 – Copied – 48 Pages
In terms of substance, this zine is one of the better I have seen in a while. Truly worldwide HC/punk zine with info on the Iranian (!), Ecuadorian, Hungarian, and SE Asian scenes with interviews with Retaque and Lesca Punk. The author travels a bunch to SE Asia (Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia), which is cool, and he interviews some people from that part of the world. I have to say though it is pretty transparent that he has a very patronizing attitude concerning these scenes and is quite intense in his criticism of Islam (including a whole article slamming it) and those countries societies, which raises the ire of his interviewees from there. I am no fan of Abrahamic faiths myself, but I have realized when I have dealt with Muslim cultures especially in that part of the world, that I do not understand how exactly that culture works, and how that religion plays into things. I would imagine it would take quite some time (e.g. years) to get a feeling for it. Plus, if you're a guest in a country, especially a white person in a country that has been colonized (e.g. most) then just zip it, you know? Anyway, great zine in coverage, but the attitude kinda bums me out. (NM)
8 Crs Gambetta / 69007 Lyon / France
xwgfx@yahoo.fr

XEROGRAPHY DEBT #18 / $3
8.5 x 5.5 – copied – 52 pages
Sorry but I can't help seeing the vicious irony in doing a zine review about a zine that is all about zine reviews. Yep, that's what we have here, several different people review a multitude of zines of all different kinds, and there is a pretty good variety. An excellent resource for the zineaholic! (NM)
PO Box 11064 / Baltimore, MD 21212
davida@leekinginc.com

ZONKED #9 / $?
8.5 x 11.5 – copied – pgs 40 pgs
A pretty excellent music fanzine that more or less follows the general *MRR* format: some columns, some interviews (including really interesting ones with UK punk stalwarts Four Letter Word and recently dissolved PDX darlings the Observers), some reviews, some photos, etc. Altogether, this was totally worthwhile read for the fan of DIY punk. The reviews are well done, the column by Steve Scanner about "Hit Song Science" is totally fascinating, and the zine is well edited and well put together. There is a lot of text to this fanzine, and not a whole lot of design, but even still the writing remains readable and interesting pretty much the whole way through. Cheers on a totally solid effort, can't wait to read the next issue! (GN)
Pete Craven / 46 Ashford Rd. / Brighton BN1 6LJ / United Kingdom

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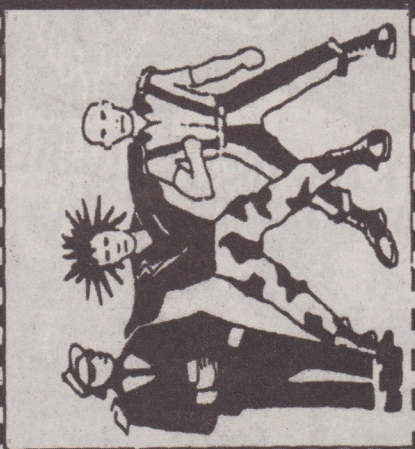

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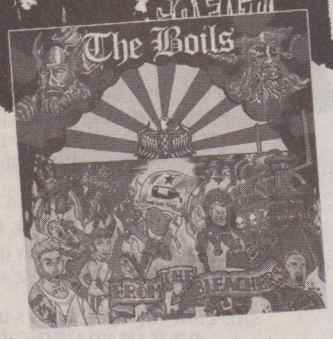

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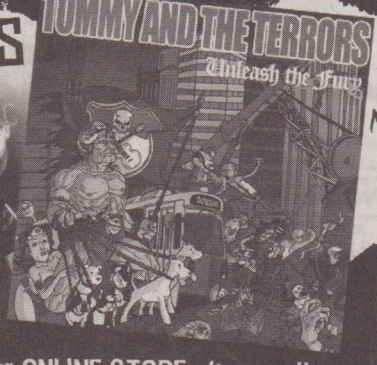

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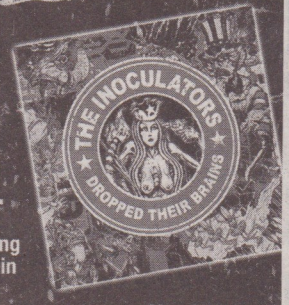

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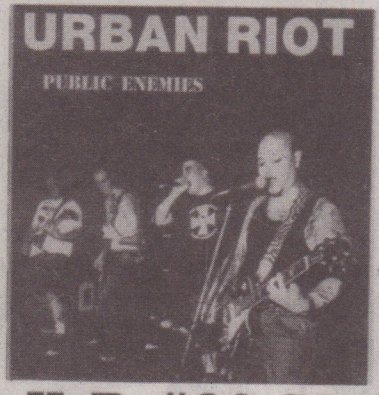

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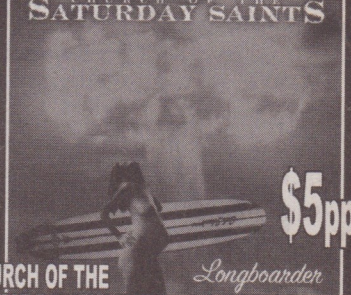

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